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170

EVOLUTION IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

BY

PERCY GARDNER, LITT.D., F.B.A.

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Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

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PREFACE

A FEW months ago I published a small book called *The Evolution of Christian Doctrine*, in which I tried to show that it is possible to combine belief in the permanent and essential principles of Christianity with a willing acceptance of the results of modern science and thought. The present work deals on the same lines with the great principles of Christian ethics, maintaining that they also need not be given up in consequence of the wider horizons of modern experience, but must be re-stated and modified to suit existing conditions. The same Christian principles seem to me to lie at the roots alike of my doctrinal and my ethical work. In the one case it is the Christian spirit working under modern intellectual conditions; in the other case it is the Christian spirit working under existing social conditions. Indeed, I planned and mostly wrote the whole work at one time, and it was only for convenience that the ethical sections

101403

were separated from the doctrinal. One reason why the ethical part was kept back was that the war has so upset and changed all social conditions that it involved a continual revision of views, while the intellectual atmosphere has not been greatly modified by the war; though, as I think, it has made clear to many how much our intellectual position in the matter of religion needed revision, and how little real hold the conventional and traditional Christianity had on the mind of the people generally.

It is in fact probable that we have not yet learned by any means all the ethical lessons which the war has to teach. Many of them must take a long time to sink down into us. But obviously it was not desirable to postpone publication on that account. If there be any profit in these pages, they are likely to be more useful while our ethical outlook is changing and reforming than at a later stage. They must needs be tentative and liable to revision.

The task of modernising Christian ethics will be immeasurably more difficult than the task of modernising Christian beliefs. In the latter case there is already a considerable consensus of opinion among the more liberal-minded. In the former case there is little

agreement even as to first principles. Thus the present work is of a merely suggestive or even sketchy character. The ordinary view that English Christians are agreed as to practical morality, but differ as to creeds, is almost the reverse of the truth. The dominance of science both physical and human has brought constantly nearer to an agreement as to Christian history and belief those Englishmen, or at all events those laymen, who sit loose to traditional views. This has been shown by the fact that reviewers of my last book do not find in it much that is original. They regard it as expressing a general tendency of thought. But our views as to the character of Christian ethics differ far more widely: I even expect that some of my friends will find the views expressed in the present volume retrograde. Naturally, I have not attempted to lay down or advocate a consistent scheme of ethics; I have only tried to survey the country and to mark out its boundaries. As regards personal morality, and the ethics of the family and the nation, there must be an immense amount both of thought and experience before anything like a fresh equilibrium can be attained.

It is generally felt that the great convulsion of our time must lead to a renovation of the

nation. So much devotion, the comradeship of the trenches, the broadening of the life of women, can scarcely fail to bring in a nobler state of things. Yet at present there are no clear indications of the lines of reconstruction. What is certain is that no mere military victory, nor growth of empire, nor a mere triumph of democracy, nor a rearrangement of classes, nor the spread of secular education, will be sufficient to renovate society. Such renovation can only come from a revival of religion, an acceptance of divine idea and impulse working from the heart of the people outwards. The kingdom of God must be within, before it can be without.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I

The Kingdom of God as first preached by John the Baptist and by Jesus, 1. The value of the soul and its relation to God, 4; and to the Divine will, 6. The non-resistance of evil, 6; implying absence of property, 7; applies only to small societies, 8. Religion as oxygen, 9.

II

The religion of the individual, 11. The earliest teaching not applied to the family and the State, 12. Enlargement by St Paul, 14. Conversion of the State, 15. Christianity does not exclude States, 16.

III

No general agreement at present as to Christian ethics, 17. Pagan and utilitarian ethics, 18. Need for broader application of root principles, 19.

CHAPTER II

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I

Patriotism in Greece and Rome, 20. Literal observance of primitive Christian ethics apt to cause reaction, 22. Revolt of Wycliffe, 24. Revival of paganism at Renaissance, 25. Revolt of the Reformers against mediæval ethics, 27.

II

Stoicism the highest point of Pagan ethics, 28. How it differs from Christianity, 30. Stoicism weak on the side of impulse, Christianity often weak on that of intelligence, 32. Hence difficulties for the modern world, 33.

III

Virtues of the northern races, 34. Chivalry, 35. Persistence of its influence, 37.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARITY

I

Secularity as a rival to religion, 39. The origin of secularity, 42. Text-books of secularity, 44. Its inherent contradictions, 46.

II

Examination of secular virtues: (1) material progress, 47. Its glamour, 49. Religious way of regarding it, 51.

III

(2) Better distribution of wealth: in itself desirable, 53. But no panacea, 54. Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, and Grahame's *Where Socialism Failed*, 55.

IV

Secular view of the nature of happiness, 58. Its incompleteness, 60. Secularity primarily a spirit of revolt, 62.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENTIFIC ETHICS

I

Fundamental similarity of men's minds, 65. Progress in ethics from organisation and experience, 66; in character rhythmical, 68.

II

The term "scientific ethics" not exact, 69. Elements in ethics based on science, 71. Utilitarian views, 71.

III

Charges brought by scientific ethics against Christianity, 74. Reply from the Christian point of view, 76. The test of fruits, 79. The truth midway between reasoned ethics and popular Christian ethics, 82.

CHAPTER V

MODERNITY IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Modern elements in Christian ethics, 87.

I

Sense of law and order in the world of spirit, 89. This prominent in the Gospels, 91 ; and in St Paul, 93. Recognition of evolution in the Gospels, 94. Growing sense of law as man emerges from barbarism, 96. Man puts himself on the side of cosmic order, 99.

II

Inadequate sense of spiritual law in England, 100 ; among the causes of the great war, 101. Need for more intelligence and organisation, 105. God does not intervene in cataclysmic fashion, 107. Our time one of special stress, 109. Enlightenment one fruit of the Spirit, 110; greatly needed, 113.

III

Christian morality essentially social, 114 ; and dwells specially on the active side of goodness, 115. The Prayer-Book defective on this side, 117. Intellectual basis of active morality, 118. Can the Christian impulse be transferred to new surroundings? 120.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHRISTIAN LAW OF CHARITY

The effect of modern tendency on Christian virtues, 123.

I

Charity, as taught in the Gospels, 125 ; as taught by St Paul, 129.

II

Charity as popularly understood, 130. Confused with almsgiving, 131. This liable to great dangers, 133.

III

Charity also confused with indifference to good and evil, 135.

IV

Real nature of charity, 138. Pervaded by a sense of spiritual relations, 140; and of accord with the Divine will, 141. The Church an ethical society, 142.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHRISTIAN LAW OF FORGIVENESS

I

Need for extreme gentleness in early Christian times, 144. The way of non-resistance, 146. Divine and human forgiveness, 147. Jewish idea of forgiveness, 151.

II

Exact statement of doctrine of forgiveness in Gospels, 153. No forgiveness without repentance, 155. View of St Paul, 156. Modern conditions, 158. No excuse for laxity and indifference, 160.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTIANITY AND THE BODY

I

Greek idea as to the body, 163. Early Christian idea, 164. Reflection in sculpture, 165. Revival of Greek idea at the Renaissance, 168. The Jews not indifferent to beauty, 170. Asceticism comes in with St Paul, 171. Modern athletics, 172. Beauty in modern schools of art, 174.

II

Modern societies for the cultivation of beauty, 176. The body as a temple of the Spirit, 179.

III

Importance of beauty in relation to the carrying on of the race, 181. Colliding tendencies, 184. Reckless propagation of the unfit, 185. The eugenic societies and their work, 186. Possible legislation, 189. Intensification of the problem by the war, 190.

CHAPTER IX

CHRISTIANITY AND THE FAMILY

No recognised code of family morality in England, 192.

I

The family in early civilisations, 193; and in early Christianity, 194. Analogies set forth by Jesus and St Paul, 194; based on the state of society at the time, 195. The strain of asceticism, 198. The Reformers, 199.

II

Decay of the family, 200; and of home life, 203. Aberrations of sexual attraction, 204. Insubordination, 206.

III

Popular Christianity has no fixed code in such matters, 208. Need of regulation, 208 Religion and happiness on the same side, 209.

CHAPTER X

THE UNREST AMONG WOMEN

I

Early Christian teaching in regard to women, 212. Pauline views, 212.

II

The present unrest, 215; draws upon a vast source of energy, 216. Loss of women's occupations, 217.

III

Need of wise women to re-state the Christian view, 218. The necessities of the race, 221. Breeding from the unfit, 222. Dominance of the sexual and subconscious in women, 225.

IV

Special problem arising from the number of the unmarried, 226. Question of celibate societies, 228. Claim to precise equality not justifiable, 230. Wide experience of callings for women a fruit of the war, 231. Every generation must sacrifice something to the future, 232.

CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIANITY AND NATIONALITY

Treatment of this subject necessary to our survey, 235.

I

Nationality set aside by the earliest Christianity, 235; also by St Paul, 236. Augustine, 238. Connection of Church and State, 239.

II

A nation in a sense a personality, 241. Nationality and race not the same, 242. Need for national ideals, 244. England and other States, 245.

III

Exaggeration of nationality in Germany, 247. Leads to militarism and brutality, 248; but only when debased by materialism, 250. Ethical currents underlying the war, 251.

IV

England suffers from extreme individualism, 253; and party spirit, 254. Insurgent women and conscientious objectors, 255. Example of Socrates, 255. At present a growth of bureaucracy, 256. Individualism debased by materialism, 257. The charge of hypocrisy, 258.

V

Vice of national selfishness, 260. Need to recognise the ideals of other peoples, 261. The Entente recognises the right of peoples to self-determination, 263. Negative international morality insufficient, 265. Can Christian principles be applied to States? 266. The outlook, 267. Need to raise international morality at least to the level of private morality, 270.

VI

The ethics of universalism, 273. The visible Church and its opportunity, 273.

EVOLUTION IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I

According to the first Gospel, Jesus began his teaching with the proclamation, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." In recent times it has been more and more clearly seen by critics that in this proclamation of the coming of a divine kingdom we may find the keynote of historic Christianity. The message was not, strictly speaking, new. Matthew attributes precisely the same words of warning to John the Baptist. And in fact they represent the consummation to which the whole of Jewish faith was tending in the age between Alexander the Great and the Christian era. The works of the Jewish Apocrypha, written at that time, are full of the hope of the dawning of a new age, when the glory of God

should be shown on earth, when sin should be put away, and the relation of men to God should pass into a new phase.

But though the idea was not new, it was taken up by Christianity into a higher region, and became the starting-point of the greatest spiritual development which the world has ever known.

Into this, as into other phrases of the earliest Christianity, we are naturally inclined to read the ideas of a later age. We think of the tree rather than of the seed. But if, as we have reason to think, the words before us are an actual utterance of Jesus at the beginning of his career, we must consider what meaning they would carry to the Galilean peasants who heard them, and for whom they were in the first instance intended. What did these carpenters and fishermen think of as the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom of God?

It would take us too far if I endeavoured to give even in outline the history of the hope of a divine kingdom in later Israel. It is a matter which has occupied some of our best scholars, and on which much light has been thrown by the discovery of fresh documents. The best summary will be found in 130 pages of a little work by Canon Charles, called *Between the Old and New Testaments.*

But we must proceed without delay to consider the new and Christian interpretation of the idea. What Christianity touched it turned to gold. Beliefs, hopes, doctrines, it baptised into Christ and sent them forward at a new and a higher level. And though in many cases the actual baptism was the work of the Church after her Master had departed, she only carried on a process which he himself had begun.

What then did Jesus mean when he began the preaching of the Kingdom?

Those who, in their quest of the Kingdom of God, came to John the Baptist, confessed their sins, and submitted to baptism. Those who came to Jesus accepted him as leader and master. But to both teachers the door of the road which led to the Kingdom lay through repentance and righteousness. The idea of repentance may have been much the same in both societies. But the idea of righteousness was very different. John seems to have inculcated a reformed way of life: the tax-gatherers were exhorted to exact no more than was due; the soldiers to abstain from deeds of violence; all to be kindly and helpful one to another. It is scarcely necessary to say that the righteousness demanded by Jesus was of another and a far less superficial character. Love to God

and man, a cleansed heart, a strong desire to live in accordance with the will of God, a childlike trust in the Father in Heaven, lay at the roots of his teaching.

"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Among the recorded sayings of the Founder of Christianity, none is more characteristic or more profound than this: it is the direct expression of the essence of the Christian religion. It is an active belief in the truth of this saying which has in all ages inspired Christian martyrs and heroes. It is the root-principle of Christian philosophy and the guiding star of Christian poetry and aspiration.

But the value of the soul in the teaching of the Founder did not rest upon its inherent dignity. Nor did it rest even on its immortal destiny; this is a view rather of later than of primitive Christianity; for the future life is dwelt on but seldom in the primitive Gospel. The value rests on the relation of the soul to God. It is as children of the heavenly Father, as beings born to do the will of God, and to make the divine will triumph in the world, that men have a real and eternal value. In comparison with this purpose of life, all external goods shrink and become of no account. The ancient Stoic held that to the really wise

man external accidents, all that could happen in the world, was indifferent so long as he retained his wisdom and his steadfast purpose. The disciple of Jesus was armed against fate, not by self-restraint and self-discipline, but by a conviction that every event of life, fortune apparently good or evil, was sent by a loving Father, and should be accepted in willing submission. Only by this attitude of the spirit could men attain to true blessedness, a blessedness beyond the reach of accident or misfortune.

It is in this key that are set many of the most characteristic sayings of the earliest Gospel. God's watchful care observes the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of the head of every man. As fathers give good gifts to their children, so God is ready to give all the best gifts to those that ask him. God's love to man is the source whence naturally flows man's love to God. And as a reflex and consequence of love to God, there is urged the love for man as a child of God, a brotherly love for all who belong to the human race. Jesus does not urge men to love their neighbours, and then to try to rise to the love of God; but to love God with all their souls in the first place, and thence to discover how worthy man, as a child of God, is of being

loved. The emphasis is laid in quite a different way from that in which it is laid in modern systems of secular ethics, where all the stress is laid on the desire for the well-being of others. To this contrast I will return in the third chapter.

It is not, however, a mere passive acquiescence in the will of God which is taught in the Gospels, but an active and devoted working, in conjunction with and in subordination to that will, for the good of men. To this theme also we shall return.

The intense realisation of the worth of the individual soul, and the slight and transitory importance of any worldly goods, led naturally to the teaching of quietism or the non-resistance to evil. The early verses of the Sermon on the Mount, inculcating the principle that when a man is struck he should offer the other cheek, when he is defrauded or persecuted he should take it in all patience, has in all ages of Christianity gained a strong hold on those followers of Jesus who have had the keenest sympathy with their Master.

It cannot be said to be impossible to carry out the great principle of non-resistance of evil, since in all ages some have practised it. In all ages, not only in Christian but in Buddhist countries, there have been small societies and

isolated individuals who have utterly renounced that struggle with competitors for a living which absorbs the energy of most of us, and been content with the crumbs which fall from the table of the world. Such were the Buddhist ascetics who wandered through India long before the Christian era, living on broken meats which were put into the alms-bowls which they carried, caring not at all for the things of earth, but bent on going in the way of their great teacher. Such were the earliest Franciscans, a company of missionaries, finding their happiness in a complete renunciation of all this world's goods, actuated by a passionate love of the poor, the diseased, the perishing. And such also were the first missionaries sent out by Wycliffe, who lived merely from day to day on alms. The attraction of this ascetic ideal filled the monasteries and nunneries of Europe with men and women who rejoiced to set aside all ambition, all hope and desire, and to take in exchange a peace which comes of self-effacement.

There is, however, one point in regard to this self-devoted life which must be dwelt on for a moment, for in England it is often strangely overlooked. The non-resistance of evil is utterly incompatible with the possession of private property. There have been and are

many good quietists who in theory agree to the principle of non-resistance, and yet are active and successful men of business, making or inheriting large fortunes. But the precept "give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away," is quite as much a part of the necessary code of the quietist as the endurance of blows or persecution. But the man who thus gave and lent would soon have nothing left. Tolstoi saw this clearly, and made over his property to his wife. This was an obvious evasion; and to such evasions everyone must be driven who tries to carry out the quietist principles in the mid-stream of modern commercial activity.[1] The real quietist, as has been realised in all ages by those who absorbed the passion for the life of non-resistance, cannot have a home, or property of any kind, or a wife, or domestic responsibilities. All these things belong, by the constitution of society, to those who are ready to fight for them; and those who are in their hearts purposed never to fight for them must go without them.

The life, then, of perfect self-surrender and non-resistance can only be carried out in small societies which live upon alms, or by

[1] See some excellent remarks of Dr Hodgkin in the *Life* of him by Mrs Creighton, p. 241.

hermits who trust for needful food to the offerings of admirers. It is, indeed, not so much life as a practice of death. The world has, no doubt, in the past, owed an immeasurable debt of gratitude to the ascetic societies and individuals who have been bitten by fanaticism for the life of the spirit, and have for it given up all worldly possession and enjoyment. If such societies ceased to exist, the world would be a far poorer and more sordid place. But it is useless to pretend that one can literally carry out the principles of quietism, of self-suppression and non-resistance, while living in the world and competing for the world's goods. These principles are very simple, and it cannot be denied that their following has been to many a way of keener happiness than such could have found in the world. But to find an ethic more suited to life in society we must go beyond them.

It is the life of the devoted few which is the purest embodiment of religion, which in its fullest development tends to be so spiritual and so unworldly as to be always at variance with the arrangements of society.

In another work[1] I have compared the intense and concentrated religion of the self-renouncing life to oxygen, the source of life

[1] *The Religious Experience of St Paul*, p. 238.

and energy among men; and the natural self-conservative life of the world to the nitrogen which is mingled with it in the air we breathe, and tempers its keenness to the needs of living beings. If a man breathed pure oxygen, save for a few minutes as a strong stimulant, he would perish through over-excitement. If a man breathed nitrogen only, he would die from the opposite effect. In the same way the pure and spiritual religion of the Sermon on the Mount has served, like oxygen, to temper the worldliness and selfishness which may easily be the death of the soul; and as they have approached nearer to these ideals men have grown into the spirit of Christ. But it would be chimerical to expect that spirit to be spread through great societies or whole nations.

It has no doubt been the custom of great religious teachers and reformers to call upon men to live continually in the intense air of religion. But this may easily be explained. They were aware of the enormous dead-weight of secular care and enjoyment against which everyone who would raise the tone of society has to contend, and in struggling against its depressing force they well might forget that a perfect victory on their own part would render all things impossible. They naturally fight their battle, which is in the cause of goodness

and of God, with all their force, and those who oppose them appear to be the enemies of the light. And it is from such struggles that purity and goodness spread in the world. No one who is fighting for victory in a good cause stops to consider whether the result of a too complete victory may not be practical difficulty and ultimate reaction. None but God knows the end from the beginning.

II

So far as we can recover the earliest teaching of Christianity, the teaching set forth in the narrative of Mark and the sayings of Matthew, it seems to deal with the individual only, and the relation of the individual to the divine Kingdom. When the family is mentioned, it is spoken of as a possible hindrance to the divine call. A man must be prepared to leave father and mother, wife and children, if they are in the way of the summons. The relation to God and Christ is so serious and urgent, that it must be maintained at any cost of mere worldly relationship. "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me." A disciple must not quit the work of the proclamation of the Kingdom even to perform the last rites to his father. The man who cannot come to the great feast because

he has married a wife is shut out from the divine realm.

The relation of the votary of Christianity to the higher units of tribe or city or state is in the same way set aside as irrelevant to the higher life. The demands of Cæsar must be complied with; but they have no relation to the things of God. The taxes must be paid; but the adherent of the new society (not yet called a Christian) has nothing to do with the disposal of them. There is no notion of a possible Christian state. Nor is there any notion of an organised society or church. The little band of disciples wandered about Palestine, having a common purse, meagrely supplied by the contributions of the wealthier sympathisers, accepting hospitality when offered, having no abiding place. No doubt, in the presence of the Lord and of his twelve apostles there were the rudiments whence, in later times, if the society persisted, an organisation must arise. But at first it was quite fluid in form.

If we regard the teaching of Christianity as confined to the preaching of the Founder, we shall have to confess that by far the greater part of modern social and industrial life stands outside it. We shall in vain try to find in it directions for carrying on professions

or trades, for the bringing up of children, the education of the young, the care of the old.

This is not fully realised by most Christians, because they take the New Testament as a whole, and supplement the sayings of Jesus with the later teaching of St Paul. In the time of Paul not merely a large section of the Jews but many of the Gentiles also had joined the society, and it had become a matter of utmost necessity to prescribe the manner of conduct of the faithful in the life of the family and the city. So Paul expands and christianises the ethics of the Jews in regard to these matters. It is the strength and purity of family life which has kept alive the Jewish race through centuries of persecution. And the love of righteousness in dealing with fellow-men, though of course not universal among the Jews, was dwelt upon and emphasised by the Prophets and the Psalmists, as it has never been dwelt upon by the religious teachers of other races. Religion among the mystic sects of the East, the only great non-Christian religious forces of the time, was almost wholly divorced from morality. The religion of the Romans consisted mainly in the performance of ancient and sacred rites, without any relation to either life or belief. Thus, in spite of the narrowness and fanaticism of the Jews

at the beginning of our era, they had a family and social ethic which was well worth baptising into Christ. And every careful reader must be astonished at the good sense, the moderation, the spiritual wisdom with which St Paul inculcates social righteousness.

I have said that Paul baptised Jewish ethics into Christ. That means that he transformed it by bringing to bear on it the contagious enthusiasm which inspired the Christian society. The same great Christian principles which shine through the words of the Founder, dominate the disciple. The superiority of the spirit to the flesh, the dominance of the visible by the invisible, the sacredness of the divine will;—when these enthusiasms touch the morality of every day, they transform it and translate it to a higher sphere. If St Paul had been a mere fanatic, he might have regarded the Christian enthusiasm as superseding and making needless the morality of ordinary life. In this direction some of St Paul's followers who had not his balance and sanity soon drifted. But the apostle, in spite of the marvellous warmth of his Christian inspiration, is very seldom drawn by it beyond the ways of good sense and practical wisdom.

The personal ethics of the first preaching, supplemented by the family and civic ethics

of St Paul, though varying from place to place, and supplemented or modified by the morals of the peoples who successively came into the Christian fold, served the world until Christianity became the religion of the state. Of course, as the fold of the Christian Church expanded, more and more of worldliness, of private desire of goods, of reputation, of honour, was necessarily absorbed into it. The nitrogen in many places was so dominant that the life-giving power of the oxygen was greatly diminished. As the organisation of the society became harder and more fixed, the highest places in it became fitter objects of ambition. But, nevertheless, the early enthusiasm persisted, and, like salt, preserved the corporate body from destruction. Saints and martyrs were never wanting in a crisis, and persecution, at intervals, did an immense service in purging away the more unstable of the adherents of the Church. And the rules laid down by St Paul for conduct in heathen surroundings ever justified the Christian inspiration and the worldly wisdom of the great apostle of the Gentiles.

This is not a historic work, and it is clear that I cannot sketch the history of the gradual adaptation of the Christian morality to the world which surrounded it, and of which gradually it became a part. My purpose is quite different:

to examine the question whether the Christian ethics can be expanded and adapted to the new world, which is so much greater than the old. I shall therefore not enter in any detail into such questions as the relation of early Christian ethics to the existing Jewish ethics, or the strong Stoic morality which was accepted by the finer spirits in the Roman Empire.

We must, however, observe that the earliest teaching of Christianity was individual and personal, and has no relation to the life of the family or the state, though of course it regards as of utmost importance the relations of individuals to the Kingdom of God. But it does not definitely exclude the relations of Christians to smaller societies. It does not, like nihilism, teach the essential wrongness of government. I shall even try, later on, to show that the essential principles of Christianity, the idea of the Incarnation, may be applied far beyond the religion of the individual, and worked into the frame of society. And indeed in such working lies, according to this book, the only chance for the future of the world. But we must allow that the seed is not the tree, nor the bud the fruit. The Founder has given us principles, but it rests with modern men to apply and to expand them.

III

There is a view widely spread, and one may almost say generally received, in modern days, that whereas the literary and historical bases of Christianity have been largely changed or undermined by the process of historical criticism, yet the ethics of Christianity are clear, easily ascertained, and indeed universally recognised. One hears on many sides expressed a wish that the ethics of the New Testament could be taught in our schools and our churches unencumbered by what is regarded as the clog of doctrinal theory and of church history. And in discussions in the newspapers or articles in the magazines the writers are apt not merely to presume that the sum of the Christian ethics is well known to all, but even to assume that in regard to its acceptance we are all at one. Bodies like the Students' Christian Union and the Christian Social Union do not begin by making it clear what interpretation of the principles of Christianity they accept, but think it sufficient to appeal to Christian feeling. Yet the truth is that, as any careful consideration of the matter will show, there are many schools of Christian ethics, and its principles have been interpreted in many ways in different ages.

In the history of Christianity, in the modern world, many of the Pagan and the Christian ideals of conduct have stood side by side unreconciled. In modern times another group of ideals, those of the utilitarian, have arisen out of the spirit of scientific investigation. There is about us a complete chaos of conflicting ideals of conduct. And there is a great need of careful and impartial investigations of the ethics of Christianity, both on the historic and on the psychologic side.

I propose, then, to consider, in successive chapters, whether the root-principles of Christianity, love to God and man, the superiority of the spirit to the flesh, a desire to do the will of God in the world, can be applied outside the field of the inner circle of Christians and the life of the cloister; whether they have sufficient power of expansion to leaven the morality of life in the material world, the relations of the sexes and the family, the relations of individuals to the state and of the states to one another. Is the Kingdom of God on the earth, which Jesus preached, a mere optimistic dream? or is it a state of society for which wise men may labour and hope?

Everyone speaks of reconstruction after the terrible war, which has devastated Europe, and

destroyed millions of our brightest and ablest young men. And unless there be such reconstruction, ruin gapes before all the states of Europe. Nowhere, I think, is reconstruction more necessary than in the ethical foundations of conduct. How unsatisfactory these foundations have been in modern states, the course of the war itself has shown, when every nation has been accusing its opponent of utter want of principle. Are then the root-principles of modern conduct worthless? And is the Christianity which is acknowledged by the states of Europe, in theory, as a guiding light, quite out of date, or inapplicable to a state of society which grows more and more complicated? I venture to think that though many received Christian maxims and ways of conduct have proved untrustworthy and misleading, there is yet in the essential and underlying principles of the Christian religion a power of growth and self-adaptation which makes them fit to cope even with the newest developments of personal and of international morality. But this can only be the case if they are relieved from close connection with the conditions of society both in the ancient and mediæval world. They need translation into the thought and the language of modern life.

II

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I

In his interesting autobiographic memoirs,[1] Mr Frederic Harrison writes of the effect produced on him when a boy by reading Paley's statement, in his *Evidences*, of the contrast between the Christian and the Pagan ideal of heroism. "I deeply absorbed the idea," he writes, "and from that moment the pagan idea of heroism seemed to me narrow, unworthy, and puerile. The desire of fame, of power, and of personal distinction, lost for me any charm it might have had; and the idea of duty and moral character entirely took the vacant place." "The new idea transformed my entire notions of right and wrong, a good and bad life." Some such change has taken place at puberty in the minds of thousands of young men brought up in Christianity; and it has commonly been called *conversion*.

[1] Vol. i. p. 5.

But when, in after years, one examines more closely the paths of conduct, one finds that the matter is not so simple. The great motive of pagan heroes was not mere love of power or of fame, but a keen patriotism, a loyalty to family, to city, and to country. In the best of them this flame of altruism burned with a bright light. Such heroes as Leonidas and Regulus thought little of personal advantage; and such statesmen as Solon, Epaminondas, Aratus, worked their best for the future good of their peoples. Such men certainly did not think lightly of duty and moral character, though sometimes their deeds were such as we find it hard to approve. In some ways their ideals are strange to us, yet to many statesmen and leaders in modern days they have been a splendid light, a star to which, in the language of Emerson, the wagon of conduct may be hitched. In some ages of the world Plutarch has come next to the Bible as the inspirer of noble deeds.

The intricate paths of conduct, the nature of right and wrong, are not so simply discovered, since an earnest impulse towards duty and moral character leads men in various directions. One learns that in the moral world there are many competing ideals of excellence, that some men are born to help the world in one

way, and some in another, that the light of heaven comes into human lives through glasses of various colours.

And this is notably the case in regard to Christian ethics. There have been in all ages of the Church simple and good men who have thought that the whole principle of Christian morality is contained in the well-known passage in the Sermon on the Mount on non-resistance of evil. When one is smitten one should turn the other cheek; when one is defrauded one should take it patiently. One should give freely to all who are in distress, without nicely inquiring how the distress came about. And such simple souls do beyond doubt acquire a profound peace. By the suppression of personal desire and the renunciation of self-expansion, they pass into another region of purer and more rarefied air. Though in the world they are not of it. And the surrounding society has generally sufficient ideality to appreciate them, to regard them as saints, to protect them from persecution.

But anyone who to any purpose studies history and the facts of the world soon finds that there is a reverse to the medal. It is not only that the material progress of society depends upon the strivings of individuals to better their condition; for it might be said

that after all this material progress is not the highest good, and perhaps destroys as much happiness as it produces. The evil results go far deeper. They have been displayed, for all to see, in many periods of the world's history. Human nature is so constituted that it cannot be raised to, or kept at, a higher level, save by constant urging. Nothing is easier, for nine men or women out of ten, than to relax and become slack. If they know that they can indulge indolence and love of pleasure without suffering for it, they will choose the obvious advantage and dismiss the thought of the future. It needs the gadfly of necessity to sting them into activities which are really necessary to their moral and spiritual health. If men can procure a passable living without energy and strife, they will, unless they be finely tempered personalities, accept it.

For such reasons, the societies which have started with a real and profound desire for the higher life have usually in fact shortly become degenerate, inert, useless. And the societies which have ceased to be kept in health by competition and external pressure have become effete and decayed. Those who have visited the monasteries of Mount Athos have learned what an attraction a life of assured tranquillity exercises over the peasantry of Greece and

Russia. In some cases it may be a real religious call which entices men to those houses of peace, but more often it is a shrinking from the need to show energy, to do battle with the world. It was not much more than a century after the time of St Francis that Wycliffe had occasion bitterly to attack the degeneracy of the order of Friars which he had founded. Within a short time of the death of Loyola the Jesuits had become a menace to Europe, everywhere making their way and opposing all that was manly and honourable.

Wycliffe first sounded the note of revolt against the Catholic system which had enslaved Europe. He called in question, not only the discipline and doctrine of Rome, but also the generally accepted Catholic views on most of the points afterwards taken up by the founders of Protestantism. He boldly maintained that a life of active well-doing was more pleasing to God than the never-ending services of the cloister: he set up a positive ideal of morality in the place of the merely ascetic and self-denying ideal which was at the base of the monastic idea, although he tenaciously adhered to the principle that poverty was the right condition for those who accepted the spiritual life.

Before the Reformation, at the time of the

Renaissance, the virtues of the pagan heroes of antiquity, which had been almost forgotten, were once more publicly proclaimed. The *Lives* of Plutarch became almost a rival to the Bible itself as a reflex of the traits of noble and manly life. And in the lives of the heroes of the Elizabethan age we may see much of this influence, as well as of the surviving spirit of pagan forefathers of Scandinavian and Teutonic race. There was a period of splendid all-round widening of conduct, marked in some directions by aberration, but on the whole tending to make our western race more manly, chivalrous, and efficient. It was indeed a *spacious* time, an age of sudden expansion and glorious achievement, fitly recognised by historians as the time of passing from mediæval to modern conditions.

What we call the Reformation was in many respects a reaction from the Renaissance to mediæval ideas. The loose morality and frivolity which had spread over Italy, France, and other countries in consequence of the revival of pagan ideals, caused men to revert to Christianity, but a Christianity too much like that of the Middle Ages. Alike in the countries dominated by the Reformation and in those swayed by its complement the Counter-Reformation, there was a revival of

Christian as opposed to pagan ideas. So far, of course, it was well. But it would have been better if, at the same time, what was best in the glorious legacy of Greece and Rome had been preserved, and piety had revived without an eclipse of reason.[1]

However well the classics held their place in education, their tendencies affected only the leisurely and well-to-do. The mass of the people had changed but little, compared with the change which had come over the advanced spirits. England in particular, as Matthew Arnold has well said, was thrust into the dungeon of Puritanism and locked in there for two centuries. Humanism floated on the surface of literature; but in the depths of the national consciousness, the pagan virtues were little accounted of, and the ethics popularly accepted in the countries which accepted the Reformation varied between the stern and harsh fanaticism of the later Judaism and the reformed and spiritual view of life and duty to be found in the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. No doubt this was greatly modified by the tendencies inherited from Saxon and Danish ancestors, adventurous, manly, and craving physical stimulants and boisterous pleasure.

[1] This is worked out with insight and wisdom in Bartlet and Carlyle's *Christianity and History*, 1917, part iv.

In some respects the *ethics* of the Middle Ages were as remote from the original teaching of Christianity as were the mediæval *doctrines* of the nature of the sacraments or the supremacy of the Papal See. And, in fact, the Reformers proceeded in the same way in the matter of doctrine and in the matter of ethics. Some of the mediæval doctrines, especially in relation to the sacraments and papal supremacy, the Reformers with energy denied: others, such as the infallibility of the Bible and the doctrine of salvation by the one sacrifice of Christ, they retained and insisted upon. In the same manner, though they rejected the teaching of submission to the Roman Church and the virtues of the monastic life, they retained the practical teaching of the clergy as to the nature of Christian charity, the individual character of goodness, and the like. The notion, no doubt, was that these teachings had an undeniable root in the books of the New Testament. And so they had; but there were in the New Testament also other principles which might correct their excess. An uncritical age was not in an intellectual position which enabled it to judge of the temporary conditions which guided the application of such teaching. And we have good right to

insist that a great deal which still passes in the minds of men as essentially Christian in ethics and conduct shall be examined in the spirit of historic research as well as in that of reason and experience.

II

The ethics of ancient paganism had, however, reached a higher level than that of the *Lives* of Plutarch, in the Stoic philosophy, which not only inculcated the virtues of manliness, self-discipline, and loyalty, but also had a distinct view of the *summum bonum* or the end of human existence. This end it found in self-subordination to the scheme of the universe: that every man had to take his place, like a soldier on guard, and to do his share in order that goodness and order might prevail over vice and disorder.

The highest pagan and the primitive Christian ethics were at one in regarding it as the highest duty and greatest privilege of men to further in the world the divine *logos*. But they differed profoundly in their way of approach to that Word. The Stoic found it in the visible order of the world and of human society; the Christian thought that the will of God, though to be traced in the world of sense, was far more fully displayed in the spiritual world

which lies behind mere sensuous experience, and further, that in the life of Jesus Christ the divine will was revealed to men most fully.

If the great mission of every man in the world is to conform to the divine will, and to further its working in the world, we must consider the three aspects which that will offers to the human faculties. To the human intellect the greatest of all tasks is to know the divine will. To the active faculties the supreme task is to be on its side, to work with it in the world. To the emotions what is needful is a love of the will of God, which shall make its cult no mere spiritless doing of duty, but a rousing enthusiasm.

There is in the original teaching of Christianity nothing which conflicts with the Stoic principle that for a consistent and full realisation of the divine order in the world, study of the facts of nature and of society is necessary. As we shall see later, Jesus appeals frequently to the sights and events of the visible world as not merely illustrating in parable the divine government of the world, but even as showing it forth. The principle of ordered working, of evolution, of divine power among men, is in the Gospels set forth in many maxims and many parables. Its ways may be traced in the succession of the seasons,

the growth of crops, the interaction of natural forces, That righteousness in man has a natural correspondence with the action of God in nature is a notion to be found alike in the Sermon on the Mount and in St Paul's letters to the converts. But though Stoicism and Christianity go thus far together, Christianity soon outruns Stoicism even in the domain of intellect. For it taught from the first that in the life and death of the Founder the ways and the principles of the divine working were more fully shown than in anything which could be derived from the mere exercise of sense and understanding. The divine Word, it held, is a light which lights every man who comes into the world. The incarnation of God is its root-principle; and from the incarnation a new and superhuman light is shed on the divine purposes in the world.

But the differences between Stoicism and Christianity are even more conspicuous in the field of will and emotion. Stoicism called on men to set themselves consciously, in manly fashion, on the side of the divine working, and to regard it with feelings of awe and subordination, to look up to it always as that after which one should strive as one's highest good. But Christianity approaches the will of man from the side, not of intelligence, but of feeling.

It has fully grasped the truth that when men love and desire a thing, they will be almost sure to attain to it. So it urges them to love God and to desire that his will may be done in the world. It puts the determination to do good to one's neighbours not on the basis of duty to him, but on the ground of "the enthusiasm of humanity." Love, as Paul says, works no ill to a neighbour, but is keen and eager to help and benefit him.

Looking at the matter in the light of psychology, we easily see that Christianity here has an enormous advantage. For whereas a sense of duty and of human dignity can only act powerfully in the case of the few who are highly developed on the side of intellect, enthusiasm and love will stir to action alike the unintelligent and the slothful. To act from an impulse is to go with the grain of human nature; to act on principle is to go against that grain. In the former case, every action towards good makes further action more easy. In the latter case, every action is a greater strain, and causes more weariness. Everyone knows that if one takes exercise in games which one enjoys, the result is far better than if one merely goes through monotonous exercises every day. The child who learns for love of the subject or the teacher, will soon

distance the child who learns in fear of punishment, or even from a sense of duty. So we can easily understand the enormous advantage of the power in the world wielded by Christianity over the power wielded by Stoicism. Stoicism has been of great value, especially in laying down the principles of that Roman law which has been for two thousand years the greatest power of order in the world. But Christianity, whatever be the defects in its practical working, has had enormous social power. It has reached classes which Stoicism could never reach. It has caused thousands to choose a life of pain and asceticism rather than of worldly wealth and enjoyment, and actually to prefer that life. It has built of unpromising materials the life of the modern world, though it has often failed to check the aberrations which have deformed it.

But it must be confessed that as Stoicism has been weak on the side of emotion and impulse, so Christianity has frequently been weak on the side of intelligence. In laying so much stress on the goodness of motive and love of mankind, it has not been sufficiently careful to study the question what kinds of action really most benefit the race. Christianity, unlike most religions, started without any defined and consistent code of ethics and

methods of life. It was a religion of the spirit and not of the world. No doubt the organisation of the Christian Church which soon sprang up as a necessary husk to the kernel of Christianity, did set itself to define the ways of good and evil, to set forth the nature of duty and of virtue. But it has never done so with anything like an adequate knowledge of the consequences of actions and the best path of progress. Partly it was the ignorance of these matters natural in the dark ages, partly it was the vested interests of the sacerdotal class. If it had not been for the traditions of Jewish morality, incorporated in the Pauline epistles, and for the survival of the ethical works of Plato, Aristotle, Boethius, and other eminent pagans, Christian ethics would have rested on a very narrow basis, and might have suffered extraordinary perversion, as in fact they did suffer in many places which were out of the current of civilisation.

Hence have arisen great difficulties for the modern world. As I have observed, the original ethics of the nascent society were only suited to a small and ascetic society; and did not give definite precepts applicable to men in the world, to families, and to nations. In a great measure, St Paul supplied the gap; but even he did not contemplate a Christian

society so greatly expanded as to take in whole cities and peoples. And on the other side the ethics of Aristotle, admirable as they are from a common-sense point of view, were in many points, such as the teaching in regard to slavery, incompatible with the deepest feelings of Christianity.

In recent times the whole question of ethics has been investigated by many schools of thinkers in a more methodical and scientific way. Some schools have taken their starting-point from an assumed fixed constitution of man, some from a calculation of the consequences of actions. I must in another chapter (IV) consider the relations of Christianity to modern scientific systems of ethics.

III

We must, however, not forget that Christianity came into contact with another form of paganism, we may say another kind of pagan virtue. The Teutonic races of Europe, Frank and Saxon and Norman, had also virtues which they inherited from their ancestors: courage, love of truth, respect for women. These were originally attached to a pagan background: but when Christianity came in, they were detached from it. Odin, Thor, and Freya passed into limbo. But the strong and manly

virtues of the race lived on, finding some compensation for the religious basis which they had lost in the bonds of nation and family. For all their fierceness and brutality, the Teutonic races had virtues. The extreme and almost insane views of Nietzsche are a reaction against their undervaluing. Nietzsche, like most original thinkers, had grounds for his views, though he developed them into utter extravagance.

Christianity in the Middle Ages did not accept the untempered excess of the northern manliness, but tried to colour and refine it. The result was a very noble construction, noble at least in theory and when accepted by fine natures, but in the practical world too often diluted with brutality and even bestiality. I speak, of course, of the spirit and the institutions of chivalry.

Chivalry, whatever we may think of its appropriateness in modern democratic communities, has in the past been the nurse of high virtues. And it had in it a Christian element, however Christianity may have opposed its abuses and excesses.

This Christian element in chivalry was of great value. The model of chivalric virtue was Louis, King of France, who was also a saint, and entirely devoted to Christianity.

And the lofty position assigned by chivalry to women was in great part the result of the veneration in which the Virgin Mary was held. Chivalry was in a measure baptised into Christ: yet the roots of it were fixed in the barbarous manliness of the invaders of the Roman Empire. Certainly there was no trace of it among the Jews, or among the Christians before the barbarian invasions. The best proof, however, that after all the influence of Christianity on the military spirit was only superficial is to be found in the custom of duelling, which was entirely opposed to Christianity, yet which held its place among the peoples of Europe most persistently until quite recent times.

Even now, though, at least in most western countries, the nobles have ceased as a class to have great importance, tradition keeps up a certain echo of the code of honour of the noble. The saying "noblesse oblige" has often more power to regulate action, and to keep men in the path of manliness and generosity, than all the precepts of Christianity and the wisdom of Aristotle combined. In England, the term *gentleman* is still used in an idealising sense, and hardly anyone would be willing to do what would in popular opinion cause him to forfeit the appellation. Excellent judges think that the venality of public life in

America is largely the result of the destruction of all feeling of caste by the growth of democracy, and attribute the comparative freedom from bribery which marks popular government in England to the persistence of a tradition of gentility.[1]

Chivalry may be, as Burke maintained, a spent force in modern Europe, but there are elements in it which may be modernised, and may be a corrective to the democratic materialism, the mere worship of money and of material progress, which is rampant among us. The end of life is not merely the comfort of the greatest number, but to live nobly, and if necessary to die valiantly. If the spirit of chivalry was exclusive and cruel, the courage and the self-devotion which it encouraged may be applied to nobler ends. If an aristocracy of birth be out of date, and an aristocracy of wealth vile and degrading, there may yet be place for an aristocracy of intelligence, of virtue, and of devotion to high purposes.

Carlyle in England half a century ago led the way in this direction. He was filled with scorn of a materialised democracy, and he maintained with the austere passion of a prophet that it was by its great men that a nation is saved from decay and dissolution;

[1] I owe this remark to a valued American friend.

that in every age it is the few, not the many, who climb the higher path, and are the saviours of society from its ever-invading diseases.

I have noticed with great interest that in recent years some of our younger writers, especially young Oxford and Cambridge men, have been drawn by the spirit of the time and their own reflections in this direction. They have come to see the dangers of a mawkish and sentimental humanity. They have recognised that we owe a great part, not only of practical efficiency, but of our best virtues, to sources little recognised either in the pulpit or the newspaper, to the ancestral spirit of honour and courage of which Christianity has in the past made but small account, yet which keep the blood of our race healthy, and enable us still to bear the white man's burden in leading and controlling the races of less endowments and poorer history. They have discovered that Christianity as it is taught covers but a part of our lives, that the traditions of chivalry are as important to us as the precepts of church and chapel. Humanism is most happily still a great power among us, and the *Lives* of Plutarch serve to fill up the deficiencies of the stories of Jewish patriarchs and the deeds of Christian saints.

III

CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARITY

I

In all European countries there is at present a tendency to set aside those axioms of Christianity on which European society has been largely based, and to substitute others. Christianity has always taught that it is possible to lose one's life through love of it, and to save one's life by disregarding it; that one must raise oneself above the obvious shows of things before one can see them as they really are; that the evident is full of illusion, and that the eternal is the invisible. Of course the mass of mankind has never been able to live by these paradoxes of the higher life; but a few saints and heroes have accepted them and carried them out in practice, and people in general have admired where they could not follow. The new spirit which opposes and denies them may perhaps best be called the spirit of secularity. And secularity has its axioms and

principles, which it is the purpose of this chapter to examine. But let us first more closely define the nature of secularity.

Let us turn back to the saying of the Founder of Christianity, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." Here the main stress is clearly laid upon the first clause: love for God was in the speaker's mind the greatest of man's duties; and love to man, however important, was only second to it. It is an assertion of the preponderant value for life of the ideal, of sympathy with the ideas according to which God works in the world, devotion to the unseen and the eternal. The secular creed accepts only the last clause of the Christian formula. Love to man it regards as the main and necessary spring of all virtue. The phrase as to love of God it regards as either unmeaning or fraught with superstition. But when we remove the idea of God we remove the spiritual elements of the present life and the hope of a future existence. There remains the world in which we live, and human beings as capable of pleasure and of pain. And we are urged to promote the pleasure and remove the pain, not troubling too much as to the nature of either, not anxious to discern what

is higher and lower, what is more or less worthy. Of course, as matters stand in the world, those who reject Theism and Christianity yet retain many Christian ideals and practices; but in a totally unchristian society these ideals, cut away from their basis of belief, would soon wither, and the secular spirit would triumph. The pursuit of "the greatest good of the greatest number" would come more and more to mean merely the attempt to improve the physical condition of mankind, and to make life more pleasant. More and more, kindness and good nature would be placed at the head of the virtues, and the following of conscience, which has sometimes a sour aspect, would be regarded as anti-social. Human affection and the sacrifice of one's own happiness to that of one's friends would remain as the highest phase of morality.

Of the various enthusiasms of our day there is probably none save secularity which is not to be reconciled with Christianity. Socialism in some of its numerous forms may easily be Christian. In the first ardour of the Christian Church, as everyone knows, property was sometimes regarded as common, and in all ages since, some Christian societies and corporations have shown a tendency to socialism. It is true that there is a radical opposition of

view between most socialists of our day and those enthusiastic Christians. For most socialists clamour for redistribution of property because they believe that a man's happiness mainly depends on the extent of his possessions. Christianity, on the other hand, tends to socialism because it encourages the notion that possession or non-possession of property is a matter of small and transitory importance. But the fact remains that Christian socialism is quite possible; and the opposition of modern secular socialists to it arises not because it is false socialism but because it is Christian.

Patriotism, again, which in some countries, as in France, Italy, and elsewhere, may fairly be called a religion, is only in opposition to Christianity in those circles where the secular national ideal prevails. It is well known that in Bulgaria, Armenia, and other countries the national feeling has been kept alive through centuries of tyranny and repression only by the instrumentality of the Christian Church. We come back to the assertion that as an enthusiasm only secularity can be considered as irreconcilable with Christianity.

It is not hard to discern the origin of secularity. It has naturally arisen in those societies in which two sets of circumstances met, an outworn and formal kind of religion,

and misery and oppression in the body of the people. The more ardent and sympathetic natures in such a society feel intensely the evils under which their comrades lie suffering. Merely to remove or even to moderate those sufferings seems a noble end in life. They naturally turn for a remedy first to the ministers of religion. If these fail to satisfy them, or speak of the sufferings of the many as natural, or to be compensated in a future world only, then they are apt to fling aside the whole of religion, as a contrivance of impostors who would fain make men docile in the present life by promising chimerical happiness hereafter. They devote themselves to a good, clear, obvious, and real, the helping of their fellow-men. And altruism has in the nature of things such sweet rewards of happiness and satisfaction that it has led thousands to a blessed life and a steady contempt of death.

A passion of secular altruism may for a time have marvellous force in uniting and strengthening a nation. This was sufficiently proved at the time of the French Revolution. And it has since been proved by the heroism of the nihilists in Russia that its contagion can make men superior to cruel punishment and indifferent to death. But if oppression

ceased, the motive power of secular altruism would be gone. It is a force of revolt and negation, not a power of order. If the bitter wrongs on which it feeds were remedied, it would soon lose its explosive force. This also was clearly shown at the time of the French Revolution, when the enthusiasm of altruism died away in a few years with the destruction of the upper classes, and gave place to a fury of military passion. France has not succeeded in making a permanent working religion of altruism, nor will the nihilists of Russia succeed.

In countries where the people are not downtrodden and where misery is not oppressively dominant, secularity exists in abundance, but it can only be called a religion in the sense in which the principles of many easy-going and respectable Christians can be called a religion. It is in such countries mainly negative, rather materialist than enthusiastic, and little likely to bring its votaries into persecution. Yet its power is widely spread and insidious, and important in the absence of counteracting forces.

It is now many years since a text-book of secularity for thoughtful readers appeared in Mr Cotter Morison's *Service of Man.* This is a calm work addressed to the intellect.

But the rising generation has been fed upon works of another kind, which appeal primarily to the feelings and imagination. Such books as those of H. G. Wells,[1] Bellamy, and Bernard Shaw, before the great war, adopted the secular tone, and appealed to secular ideals, although perhaps these writers would not deny the existence of overruling spiritual powers. What is of more importance than the works of any individual writers is the general vogue of a secular spirit in most of our newspapers and magazines. It is not so much that religion is attacked or denied: rather that it is generally assumed to be out of date, and that it need not be taken into practical account. By the secularist party it is assumed that children can be taught all they need to know, and can be trained in the ways of moral behaviour, without the help of religion. We know that in some of the Colonies secularist education has gone great lengths: but its obvious insufficiency has in some places resulted in a reaction.

More recently Sir F. Younghusband has produced a book[2] which contains what may fairly be called a secular imitation of Christian-

[1] Recent events seem greatly to have altered Mr Wells' outlook.

[2] *Mutual Influence.*

ity, in which the spirit of the nation or the community is put in the place of the Divine Spirit as the inspiration of a good life.

It is, however, unnecessary to say more as to the nature of secularity, or its prevalence among us. I must pass to the immediate subject of the present chapter. My contention is this: Christianity starts with paradoxical axioms, which lead to a life which has for eighteen centuries passed as noble and lofty. Secularity starts from axioms apparently obvious and full of common sense; yet it leads in practice to a quagmire which there is no passing, to practical failure out of which there is no escape.

In order to establish this latter thesis, let us look at human life if possible in the purely secular spirit, to discover what courses of action it must regard with most favour, and to what results we should attain in following those courses of action in a wholly secular way. We know what results, both good and bad, have ensued when men have followed in a strictly religious spirit such injunctions as "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Let us see what will be the result of following, in a purely secular spirit, such an injunction as "Seek ye first the happiness of mankind."

Kant propounded a test of the value of the practical maxims of conduct, which is of great wisdom. The test is to try whether the maxim on which one acts will bear being made into a general rule of conduct. By this test I propose to try some of the secular principles. We shall find that though they may pass muster as guiding principles of some individuals, or groups of men, in a society which even now is largely dominated by religious feeling and idealist aspirations, they are self-destructive when accepted by society at large.

II

We may select as specimens of the saintly virtues of secularity the two following: (1) devotion to material progress, (2) devotion to redistribution of wealth among the people. Surely the pursuit of these ends is above all things worthy "service of man." I am not, of course, about to condemn them in themselves. But it can be shown that pursuit of them, without ideals, and in secular fashion, leads to precisely the opposite result to that which the pursuer desires. Such pursuit tends not to the happiness, but to the misery of mankind.

(1) Let us first consider material progress,

the more and more complete exploitation of the forces of the material world in the service of human convenience. In regard to this progress, the axiom of secularity would be that it continually provides us with fresh gratifications, with new ways of filling our desires, and so must greatly further human happiness. This looks very much like a truism ; but when we closely examine it, we find that it makes no account of important and indeed fundamental facts of human nature. One of these is, that every gratification of a desire leaves behind it a desire for further gratification, produces in the mind a new need. And as fresh needs accumulate, happiness becomes harder and harder of attainment. The more complicated and elaborate the machinery of life, the more easily is it thrown out of gear, so that the wheels run heavily. And each successive gratification of a desire becomes a less keen pleasure than the last. Thus the material gratifications which a more complicated life heaps about us become, by a fatal law, like the reputation of Lancelot,

> "Pleasure to have it, none ; to lose it, pain ;
> Now grown a part of me ; but what use in it?"

As well-being requires the conjunction of more and more elements, it must necessarily become harder and harder to attain, and

therefore be more seldom attained. The discontent which is the main spur of industrial and material progress is certainly not in the line of happiness.

We hear of American millionaires who bathe in a bath of onyx, and of ladies who wear diamond rings of such magnificence that they cannot put on their gloves. Perhaps we shall hear next of millionaires who never put on a pair of boots twice, and who disdain ever to speak except through the telephone. But in what way this artificial multiplication of inconveniences can tend to the increase of happiness does not clearly appear.

The great scientific discoveries of our day have about them a certain glamour which may naturally dazzle. But when we soberly consider them, this glamour is seen to hide a great deal of illusion. They have increased out of all proportion the facility of intercourse between men. Is it then such a great advantage that the world should every year be growing smaller and smaller? The restlessness of life has immensely increased: we are always on the move. We can scarcely be said to live in one place. We know what lies on the surface of all European countries, and have acquaintance with a world of hotels; but this merely physical contact has not brought about a closer

moral contact and sympathy between class and class or between nation and nation. It is a very suggestive fact that almost every great discovery is exploited first of all in the cause of military efficiency. One of the greatest spurs of physical invention is the desire to kill as many people as possible in the shortest time. I need not dwell on a theme which has naturally been uppermost in recent years in the minds of all who have time for reflection. But it may be said in all seriousness that we have reached a state of things in which the unmoral and inhuman use of the discoveries of the great inventors threatens the destruction, not merely of our material civilisation, but even of the races of Europe. Any day a great fresh discovery may be made which will enable a general in a few minutes totally to destroy the forces of his opponent. Would he hesitate to use it? Analogy indicates that he would not hesitate; such is the exasperation between the nations in conflict. In his *World Set Free*, Mr Wells has tried to foreshadow this very event. We say that it would mean the end of war; but we can scarcely suppose, things being as they are, that the rulers who first gained control of this invention would not use it in order to establish the predominance of their own people. It would work, not in the

service of civilisation and good will, but in the service of jealousy and hate.

But let us turn to the religious way of looking at material discovery, which I take to be the following. All science has a religious side, for it implies a reverent study of divine law as manifested in the material world. All practical discoveries, steam, photography, electricity, and the like, are divine rewards bestowed in return for the self-abnegation and the reverence of the man of science. No doubt, one sows and another reaps: the great inventor profits by the self-devotion of the obscure scientist, who loved knowledge for its own sake and gave his life for its attainment. The reward is divinely given; but like all the gifts of God, it may be turned to good or bad uses, it may serve to promote self-will, or to further the higher destinies of man. By physical discovery man becomes stronger and richer: everything depends on the way in which he uses the strength and the riches. In themselves they are means which may be used to any possible end.

A parallel case in politics is familiar to us all. Not long ago the essence of liberalism was supposed to lie in an attempt to extend the franchise to fresh classes of people, to broaden the basis of representation. But now,

when the franchise has been greatly extended, we have come to see that after all the main thing is the kind of Parliament and the kind of government which results from the elections. Extending the franchise is extending freedom and opportunity; but the freedom has to be well used if any advantage is to be secured.

In just the same way scientific inventions extend power, but they do not make it certain that the power will be well used. Nor will it be well used unless two conditions are observed. First, the study of man, the investigation of human nature, must not be pushed aside by merely physical science. If inventions are used without regard to the nature of man and society, they will be wrongly used. And mankind must master and grasp them; it must be recognised that the mere fact that science makes certain things possible is no reason why they should be allowed. To take an obvious instance: many people seem to think that since motor cars can travel forty miles an hour on a road, it is tyranny to prevent them from doing so, or because houses can be built twenty storeys high, it is necessary to tolerate such buildings. But no invention has the least right to override the interests of the community. And these interests are not merely obvious and physical: it is as true now as it

was two thousand years ago that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

III

(2) It remains to speak of the better distribution of wealth among the people. This is the main object of working-class representatives in Parliament, and of many writers who feel deeply how terrible are the contrasts of extreme wealth and extreme poverty which exist among us. In some of the Australian states politics have been largely based on systematic attempts to level up and level down the existing inequalities; but the results of legislation conducted in this spirit have scarcely been satisfactory.

No doubt, some kind and degree of socialism is necessary for the better constitution of society. We have gone so far in the destruction of personal responsibility and self-reliance, that we must go further and introduce more central control. Experiments in the direction of municipal trading and national regulation of the sources of wealth are very desirable, so long as we can manage to stop at the right point. The general good needs fencing against the immoral activities of trusts and great employers. A raising of the level of life for the

poor of great cities is in itself a thing so desirable, that one is tempted to grasp at any means by which it can be brought about, without too closely scrutinising them.

But yet nothing can stop the revenges of the eternal laws of justice and honesty if they are violated. Any violent appropriation of wealth, by invasion of the rights which have come into existence with the sanction of society, must produce more evil than good. If public greed clutched at private riches, they would turn to dust in the hands which seized them. For without security and settled law, riches cannot exist. And the commonwealth has to be raised to a very much higher level than the present before it can be trusted to possess and administer a general fund of possessions. All experience warns us that communistic experiments are sure to fail unless they are based upon some ideal enthusiasm, in fact, unless they have a religious spring of action. A more equal distribution of wealth is doubtless in itself a desirable thing. If all the rich were happy and all the poor miserable, then redistribution of wealth might greatly raise the level of general happiness. But everyone knows that this is not the case. There is probably a certain degree of squalor and poverty which makes happiness almost

unattainable, though this again is a matter in which those who judge the matter from a distance are very liable to delusion. But it appears that the usual secularist remedies for poverty will not work amid the surroundings of human nature.

Let us suppose that they might be of practical efficacy to such a degree that an economic condition of society could be reached like that set forth in Mr Bellamy's *Looking Backward.* That book has captivated many, and it is perhaps the best representation to be found of a secular earthly paradise. But the imagination shown in it is just the imagination of a grocer's clerk. No one who knows anything of human nature could suppose that mankind would find such a state of society blissful or even tolerable. The people living under it would simply perish of ennui. If such a society existed, its only chance of escape from rapid degeneration would lie in the revival of those religious enthusiasms which people of the secularist school regard as out of date and moribund.

A recently published book, Mr Stewart Grahame's *Where Socialism Failed,* has given us a wonderful record of an attempt to construct in Paraguay a society on a basis of economic communism, but without religious

sanctions. The founder, Mr William Lane, was a man of great magnetic power, and wholly possessed by a spirit of secular altruism. The story of the disastrous failure of his project has been well told. But the interesting point in relation to the present subject is this: after the colony had degenerated into what the inhabitants themselves called a hell upon earth, Lane went out with a few devoted followers to make a new settlement. For a time the enthusiasm of the chosen few buoyed them up. But before long Mr Lane found it necessary to introduce some kind of belief in a great overruling spiritual power, on whom he freely lectured, though the belief he taught seems to have been too vague to exercise much influence on the community, from which he presently withdrew. The residue of the colonists which he had left went from bad to worse, until they were saved from destruction by the teachings of a Christian schoolmaster, and by the abandonment of all their original notions. It is a marvellous story; and it is hard to see how those who are not utterly case-hardened against experience can refuse to learn from it.

We have only to compare the empty fancies of Mr Bellamy with the hard facts of the Australian colony in Paraguay to learn how

utterly false is the view of human nature on which Mr Bellamy builds. Long ago Mrs Browning wrote:

> "Your Fouriers failed,
> Because not poets enough to understand
> That life develops from within."

Many a leader since Fourier has failed for the same reason. Yet we have Mr Belfort Bax writing: "According to Christianity, regeneration must come from within. The ethics and religion of modern socialism, on the contrary, look for regeneration from without, from material conditions and a higher social life." Which view best fits the facts of history and psychology? These facts make it sufficiently clear that a merely secularist and unideal pursuit of material progress and general comfort is self-destructive and leads to a result the exact opposite of that desired.

I might pursue the theme of the self-destructive character of the axioms of secularity into other fields. I might show how a mere kindly and undiscriminating distribution of alms tends to produce widely-spread misery and degradation. I might even prove that the practice of medicine in a too secular and materialist spirit may tend to lower the vitality of men, by aiding the survival and propagation of those who are really unfit for life. But I

refrain; for such argument may easily degenerate into pessimism. After all, it is much more useful and hopeful to advocate the better course than to show the unsatisfactory character of the worse course, though the latter proceeding may be sometimes expedient and necessary.

IV

Let us turn to the secularist axiom in regard to the nature of happiness itself, that it is the sum of gratifications. This axiom is false. We can doubtless attain to pleasure on any particular occasion by indulging some desire, or obtaining something we longed for. But it is clear that we cannot by such means really raise the level of happiness in our lives. Happiness depends infinitely less on successive gratifications than on permanent conditions. It is like the water in a well, which rises by the nature of things to a certain level, but can only for a little while be raised above that level by the addition, or depressed below it by the subtraction, of water. Every pain, as Socrates long ago maintained in the *Phædo*, brings with it a sequel of pleasure, and every pleasure brings with it a sequel of pain. We are told by physiologists that a man's heart gives a certain number of beats

in the day or week, and that if its action be for a time quickened or retarded, the average is soon re-established. Happiness, like the action of the heart, has a tendency to the average. Of course it depends in a considerable degree on health, on the permanent domestic relations, on a satisfactory employment of active powers, but only in a less degree on the attainment of objects of desire. If I may briefly dwell on my own experience, it is this. The happiest man I ever knew, a man who was not only always cheerful, but who seemed to radiate happiness on all who came near him, was one who lost by accident or disease all his children, then his charming and beloved wife, who died of a gradual decay, then almost all his property. In the last loss he almost rejoiced, as it set him free to undertake the work of a Christian evangelist, in which he found intense happiness.

By overvaluing mere material advantage, and by placing all the stress on the procuring of it for the greatest number, society makes a mistake parallel to that made by materialist and over-indulgent parents. It is known to everyone that when fond parents indulge every wish of their children, without regard to their future life or their character, those

children are not merely made intolerable to all around them, but are utterly maimed and unfitted for the conflicts of the world. It is less generally recognised that this principle has a wider application. In a rude and harsh state of society, where untamed egotism is the mainspring of action, kindness, indulgence, mildness, are beautiful qualities, and tend to make life more endurable. But as with advancing civilisation society becomes more humane, and the primary forces of human nature have less free play, the value of mere indiscriminate kindness and unselfishness gradually falls. In a soft and unmanly age, a kind of unselfishness may easily become a greater danger to society than selfishness. For pushing egotism at least secures the survival of the more energetic: indiscriminate kindness may have precisely the opposite effect, and secure the persistence of the unfit. There can be no real corrective save the merging both of selfishness and of unselfishness in an impulse higher than either, the desire to forward in one's own person and to promote among all whom one can control such ends and purposes in life as are in harmony with the laws of the visible and invisible world. The working for ideal ends, the promotion of character, the placing of perfection above

happiness,—these alone can keep society from degeneracy, weakness, and decay. And these are the things implied in the luminous sayings of the Founder of Christianity as to doing the will of God and loving it.

We can distinguish four stages in this matter, or, since they are not successive but contemporaneous, we may perhaps better call them four levels. The lowest is the level of mere selfishness, at which a man drives and pushes for his own advantage and that of his family in sheer disregard of the interests and feelings of other people. Next to this is the level of secular altruism, at which he recognises the claims of others and is willing to consider their happiness as well as his own. The third level is in some respects lower and in some respects higher than the second, it is that of the man with a conscience, of the Puritan who is earnestly determined to do the will of God in the world, but who in doing it makes but small account whether of the happiness of others or of their ideals, which may be different from his own. As the altruist is the pleasing man, he is the strong man. But there is a fourth level, far higher than any of these, the level of those who live for the ideal, but not only for their own ideals; who are willing to give themselves,

body and soul, to promote not only happiness but character and the higher well-being of those around them. This is the level of Christ, and of the great saints who have followed Christ from the beginning.

What we have thus far said is neither recondite nor obscure. How is it, then, that the schools of secularity cannot see facts which seem to lie on the surface? The reason is not far to seek. As I have already observed, the spirit of secularity is a spirit of revolt against tyranny, oppression, and hypocrisy. And it retains the impress of such an origin. Every militant secularist who has within him any divine spark, believes that the reason why his principles fail to work is to be found in the faulty constitution and regulations of society. The desire to change these, so as to make happiness more attainable, is the spring of energy which gives him a purpose in life. The hope of remodelling our social surroundings keeps him from despair, and an intense belief that they may be greatly improved often makes him an optimist. Very commonly he is a socialist of some kind, and almost always he feels with Mill, that unless there were a prospect of greatly changing the face of society, life would be a mere intolerable burden to the majority.

It would be a sad thing in any way to impede the enthusiasm which is working in all countries for the improvement of the relations of classes. Experiments in socialism, even if they are sure to fail, will be welcome to most thinking men, unless their results seem likely to be quite disastrous. Yet it must surely sometimes occur to the most optimistic of reformers that, after all, experiments must be tried in the existing medium, that of human nature. The tests of the axioms of religion and the axioms of secularity lie in a region which will no more be affected by outward changes than the depths of the ocean are affected by a change of wind or of temperature. The cardinal conditions alike of religion and of progress are, first, that all visible things shall be estimated in relation to human character and happiness; second, that man shall live in the light of divine ideas, shall try to discern the will of God and to walk in accordance with it. Thus we end as we began, and we find that the method of Jesus is the only method ever set forth in the world which will necessarily lead to righteousness and happiness. To do the will of God, to know the will of God, to love the will of God; these are the first, the second, and the third conditions of a good and worthy life. What

is needed is not that we should throw aside these fundamental principles of Christianity, but that we should work out their corollaries in relation to the conditions of the new age, as our predecessors tried to work them out in relation to the circumstances of their respective times. We want not revolution but evolution.

IV

CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENTIFIC ETHICS

I

In various chapters of this book I shall have to insist that one of the greatest needs of our time, even from the ethical point of view, is a raising of the general intellectual level. I propose here to explain and to expand that saying.

It is very doubtful whether, by any eugenic legislation or conviction, it would be possible, through artificial control of marriage, within many ages greatly to raise the average intellectual capacity in a country. The difference, that is, the natural difference in mental capacity, between man and man, apart from training and the effects of character, is probably much less than most people suppose. One continually comes across people living quietly, and in no way distinguished, who seem to have quite as much natural capacity as highly trained lawyers or professors.

The peasant will often show a native shrewdness which, if he had only been trained from the cradle, would have assured him a high position among the great. The life of Abraham Lincoln is perhaps the most remarkable proof of this in recorded history. Some of the ordinary middle-class women, in novels of George Eliot or Barrie, show powers of observation and reasoning as keen as those of a trained man of science. And it is quite impossible to maintain that the men of modern Europe are by birth on a higher intellectual level than the men who listened to Socrates or were contemporary with Plutarch. The enormously higher skill and efficiency of the moderns in most provinces of thought and action is altogether the result of training and method. We constantly take a short straight course where our ancestors wandered this way and that. We have found out how, by reducing investigation to a system, and by recording all the results which are reached by researchers, to enable one man to start where another left off, and so to build the roads of science across swamps and deserts until we reach realms quite inaccessible to our fathers.

And the comparison of the hive of bees with the solitary bee, or the ant with the gnat, encourages us to think that perhaps in the

future human society may, through better discipline and closer association, reach an ethical and intellectual level far beyond our present reach. If we go on storing the results of experience, we may save to each man born so much time and energy, and give him so splendid a field for exertion, that he may learn to look upon us as we look on the natives of Greenland or of Central Africa, whose brain is not physiologically very different from ours, but who are so unorganised that each man has to give all his energy to the mere preservation of his existence, to wear out a complicated brain in the accomplishment of simple tasks.

The belief which lies at the root of all ethical philosophy is that on the whole morality is progressive. Indeed, without such a belief there is no escape from the profoundest pessimism. If we look at the ethical phenomena of any particular age or country, it may be hard to see any definite progress. Indeed, at many periods there seems to be distinct retrogression. To suppose that ethical progress is continuous is quite impossible to any student of history. We find times of rapid improvement followed by times of stagnation or of deterioration. Some races seem for centuries steadily to pursue a downward course. But if we look at the broad trend of morality, and

take our points for comparison at a sufficient distance apart, we shall find that progress is on the whole more usual than decay.

In fact ethical progress, like all motion, is in character rhythmical. Like the waves of the sea as they break on the shore, it is alternately advancing and receding. Usually it is advancing in some respects, and receding in others. It follows a course of evolution like that followed in the case of all kinds of living creatures, which are constantly putting forth tentative variations, some of which are in the line of degeneration, but which on the whole tend, not merely to adapt the kind of creature to its habitat and surroundings, but really to improve it.

And man with his hopes and ideals, not without divine help, cuts at every point into the course of evolution. As he modifies the development of domestic animals to suit his needs, so he modifies the working of mere cause and effect in the moral world. He adopts and justifies courses of action which might seem to lead to destruction by linking them with higher needs and spiritual progress. To take a simple example: the monastic idea at first sight would seem to lead to ruin, since it withdrew from society a multitude of the best and noblest of both sexes, and

condemned them to sterility of offspring. Yet he would be a bold historian who would assert that on the whole it tended rather to the ill than to the good of mediæval society.

The paradoxes of Christianity as to the value of the soul, the possibility of saving one's life by sacrificing it, and losing it by an unworthy clinging to it, the superiority of the unseen to the seen and the eternal to the temporal are true for all time, and transpose into a new and higher order the mere process of ethical change. There are thus in any reasonable investigation of ethics three things to consider: first, the natural consequences of actions amid ordinary material surroundings; second, man's power to work for the ideal and invisible rather than for the obviously expedient; and third, the overruling hand of a Providence, sometimes seen, more often suspected, in any case not to be fully apprehended save by the eyes of faith, which "shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will."

II

When we speak of scientific ethics, the phrase is no doubt not strictly correct. For ethics has to do with practical life and action, science only with knowledge. No amount

of ordered and exact knowledge or science would enable a man to choose well a course of action or to avoid wrong-doing, apart from the pursuit of ideals or the desire to accomplish something good. Science at most is a light, to show the road; but it does not help us to walk in the road, still less to make it. But the term scientific ethics is a convenient one, and it is easily to be understood. It means a system of ethics which can be defended in the courts of reason, which works out consistently the principles on which it is based, which is self-consistent. And it also means, almost necessarily, an ethic which is based on a consideration of the consequences which flow from various courses of action, since effects are more easily observed and recorded than other aspects of action.

Strictly speaking, a scientific system of ethics may be built upon any principle which a man may adopt. That principle might be the desirability of happiness for the person who constructs the system, to whose well-being that of all other people is to be subordinated. Or it might be the good and the prosperity of a particular society or nation: such a *summum bonum* as that has been in fact adopted by the narrower of the ancient Jews and the modern Germans. But most people feel such narrow

restriction to be profoundly immoral. The most noted principles which have served as bases for reasoned systems of morality are conformity to nature, as preached by the Stoics, and the search for the greatest happiness of the greatest number upheld as the true law of action by the various sects of modern utilitarians.

As regards the methodical or scientific side of ethics, it is clear that, eugenics apart, it can only be reached by systematic research. Such research will naturally fall into two divisions, the historic and the psychologic or analytic. In examining the history of the past, we can ascertain within certain limits to what results various courses of action led, results whether good or bad in the opinion of the searcher. And by analysis we can in a measure determine what kinds of action are most suitable to our surroundings, physical or social, which best fit in with our faculties and tend to further or to diminish life and energy.

As regards the adoption of principles of conduct, there have certainly been strong drifts in our time. Almost all people take a more or less utilitarian view; that is, they assume that whatever leads to greater happiness in a community is ethically good. But this, after all, is only taking the whole question one

stage further back; for the question, What is good? we substitute the question, What is happiness? and this is really a matter in which opinions differ as widely as they do in regard to the good. But one or two points are to be observed in all, or almost all, modern schemes of scientific ethics. In the first place, they eliminate the future life. This in itself is an enormous change; for in the Middle Ages the question of happiness and misery in the future life quite dominated the discussion as to what was right and what wrong in the present state of existence. I do not mean that people generally disbelieve in a future state. But those who do believe in it have come to think that it will not be swayed by different laws and principles from those which dominate the present life; that it will not be cataclysmic and discontinuous with the present. And in the second place, modern scientific moralists do not accept as infallible any dicta of authority, not even from the Gospels. Though sometimes Christians, they think that it is necessary to revise all the dicta of ancient authority in the light of present and ascertainable fact.

I do not mean to say that they are necessarily right in this procedure; but it is so universal that it must have some sort of justification in the conditions of the time. It

shows, at all events, the direction in which trained and educated minds are drifting. And it becomes necessary to consider whether some of the ethical notions which we have inherited from Christian ancestors, and probably imbibed with our mother's milk, can hold their own amid the changed intellectual conditions of the twentieth century. There is in our age, as in all past ages, a certain consensus or agreement as to the best principles of action, the line which progress is likely to take. But the question imperatively presents itself how far the present agreement is Christian in character.

I eliminate, as after the argument of Chapter III. I think I have a right to eliminate, the more short-sighted and materialist cult of utility. On those who are satisfied with such a cult nothing that I can say is likely to have any bearing. I am speaking of the wiser and more thoughtful ethical investigators, such as some of the teachers in our universities and the writers who have by common consent reached a high level as moralists. What such men have to say must needs be worthy of careful consideration.

III

Some thoughtful writers who have studied ethics from the rational and evolutional point

of view, while they have been strongly impressed by the necessity of changing our notions of ethics to bring them into focus with a reasonable view of man's position and functions in the world, and with an evolutional view of history, do not see how such a view is to be brought into harmony with Christianity. There is, in their opinion, an irreconcilable contradiction between the outlook of philosophic ethics and the outlook which belongs to Christianity. It is necessary to consider this position carefully. In a paper read at the Conference of Modern Churchmen held at Oxford in August 1916, Professor Caldecott set forth the main points as to which this contradiction exists with great clearness and force.[1] The present discussion will in the main follow the lines which he traced.

Christianity, it is said, lays stress upon sympathy with weakness and suffering. It is ready to praise the devotion of the strong to the weak, the self-limitation of the strong in order to help the weak. If a man ruins his career, gives up his prospects of usefulness to society for the sake of an ailing parent or a delicate child; or if a woman spoils her own

[1] Now printed in the *Modern Churchman* for October 1916. With this may be compared Dean Rashdall's more elaborate *Conscience and Christ.*

life from devotion to a weak and helpless friend, Christianity will applaud the sacrifice. But more robust ethics, thinking of the general good, will not commend the sacrifice of the more valuable to the less valuable life.

Christianity, it is said, insists upon frequent repentance, upon allowing the mind to dwell on failures in the past, and living in contrite remembrance. A healthier morality will set aside a painful dwelling on past shortcomings or transgressions as morbid, and will direct attention rather to duty which lies in front; will be too busy with good works to waste time on self-condemnation and remorse.

Christianity, it is said, regards suffering as a heaven-sent discipline, to be accepted and endured in obedience to the divine will: philosophic ethics will be unwilling to endure any suffering for which a remedy may be found; will be restive under the hand of affliction, and determined not to suffer.

Christianity, it is said, by bringing in the notion of retribution for good or evil in a future life, sets before men another set of motives than the desire to do good and to further happiness in the world, which is the only purpose of life which systematic ethics can accept as satisfactory.

Christianity, it is said, is dull and obtuse in

its recognition of the value of beauty, whether in nature or in art. It is indifferent to æsthetic considerations; and the delight in a healthy body and mind does not appeal to it. Beauty and health are far more highly valued by the systems of ethics more directly based upon reason and the desire of well-being.

Finally, Christianity, it is said, in place of regarding virtue as an infinite progress, maintains that the ideal of virtue was attained once, and embodied in a historic character, whom we may copy, but cannot surpass. This, according to the rational moralists, stunts virtue and checks aspiration, does away with that goal towards which men ambitious of goodness are ever striving. Rational ethics places perfection as an ideal in the future rather than as a record in the past. Such is, in brief, the indictment which we have to consider.

Of these objections to Christian ethics the last is perhaps the most formidable. But it is an objection, not to the essential principles of Christianity, but to popular Christianity, with its cataclysmic notions. If the Saviour was in fact a purely supernatural revelation, set forth in order that Christians for all time should look back rather than forward or upward, then indeed the infinite character of

virtue is obscured. But if we may regard the divine *logos* or purpose as revealed indeed in the historic life of Jesus, but revealed also in the lives of those who carried on his work, in the leaders and saints of the Christian Church, and even in our own days, then the ideal character of virtue is saved. In that case we do not reach eternal life by a mere obedience to the Christ of the Gospels; but as St Paul says, we may grow into Christ in all things, and complete ourselves the sufferings of Christ for the good of men.

There is indeed an astounding contrast between a Christianity which only looks back and the writings of the New Testament. From beginning to end they speak not of the past but of the future, of a world which has to be changed and redeemed, of a Kingdom of God which lies far in front of us, and towards which the Society is ever striving. It is for forgetting what is behind, and reaching towards what is before. Such is the Christianity of Christ and of St Paul. And if Christianity be thus dynamic and not static, a stream of tendency rather than an organised system, the difficulties above set forth lose their bitterness. Philosophic and rational ethics itself is by no means a completed scheme, as to which all thinkers are

agreed, but merely the result of the best thought of the time. In the future many views which are now regarded as established in the ethics of the schools may very probably be abandoned. Twentieth-century moralists are no more infallible than were the moralists of the eighteenth century, whom we now value but moderately. But Christianity also is not a completed system; and in the future, as in the past, there will be give and take between the philosophic and the Christian moralist.

For example, in the Middle Ages indiscriminate almsgiving to the poor was regarded as of the essence of Christianity. Now, all sensible people see that unless giving is exercised with caution and wisdom it must tend to the utter demoralisation of the community.[1] In this case systematic ethics has superseded popular Christianity in the minds of all reflecting people. On the other hand, in the past philosophic ethics has been wrong in attributing too much value to mere abstention, to the negative side of morality. It has said "thou shalt not" far more often than "thou shalt." But Christianity has been comparatively free from this blot. From the very first teaching of the Founder, Christianity has laid stress upon the active virtues.

[1] To this subject I return in Chapter VI.

It has dwelt upon active love to God and man, upon self-surrender and zeal for God. It has seen that man develops from the heart outwards; and that calculation of results, though necessary, is not of the essence of goodness.

The first and last word of Christianity is that men are to be judged by fruits. If systematic ethics can show any principle of action to lead to evil, Christianity will in time reject it; and will be able to do so without suffering shipwreck. But meantime, in most of the clashings between philosophic and Christian ethics, Christianity seems to be more in the right, because it regards men in a more inward way, and lies closer to the springs of action. The philosopher regrets the sacrifice of the more efficient to the less efficient. But has he considered what the result would be in the world if the more efficient took the law into their own hands, and determined that their interests should be first considered? Would not all society soon become hopelessly brutalised? The community would, it is true, have a perfect right, in the general interest, to step in and forbid too much self-sacrifice on the part of the efficient. But that would be quite a different thing from the practice of self-conservation by the

efficient on grounds of conscience. In the ethics of the individual, self-sacrifice must always hold a high place. But when it becomes a danger to society, it is for society to step in and set a limit to it.

Take the case of a shipwreck. It has been the English rule always to save first the women and children, to let male passengers come next; and the captain is usually one of the last to take to the boats. Yet the captain's life is probably the most valuable in the ship. And many of the women are of far less value to society than the men without whom they would be even dependent on friends for their daily bread. Yet surely no one would wish to see the English rule invalidated. Sometimes, when the passengers are of a more backward race, the men push their way to the front and demand the first chance. Everyone in such a case would justify the crew in shooting them like dogs. Yet they might, from a strictly utilitarian point of view, establish some ground for their selfishness.

The case is not dissimilar with regard to repentance. It may be carried to excess; and a man who has once gone astray may be so prostrated by remorse that his power of doing good is utterly crushed. But this extreme is less of a danger, as it is certainly far less

common, than its opposite. If a man who has done evil merely says, like Achilles in the *Iliad*, "I went astray," and takes no further thought about the matter, he shows a callous conscience and a hard heart. He ought to feel that a deed of wrong is not only harmful to the community, but a sin, an act of rebellion against the Power of Good in the world, a discord in the scheme of the universe. And he ought to feel bitterly sorry: indeed, unless he really repents he is as like as not to do the same thing again. In this matter, as in many, Christianity is wiser than the wisdom of the world.

In regard to our duty to regard evil and suffering as things to be opposed and not to be endured, the true principle seems to me to lie midway between popular Christianity and systematic ethics. Both, in fact, are right in their assertions and wrong in their denials. Evil and suffering are certainly our enemies, to be met and remedied in every case, in the way in which Jesus met disease. And yet any experience of life will show that under these malign forms there often lurks a spiritual meaning. Looking back on his life, a man may well see two things constantly intertwined: on one side suffering as the result of weakness of will or of folly,—for in the course of the

world unwisdom is punished as severely as badness of intention,—and on the other side a certainty that by bearing in a manly spirit of faith the punishment which came upon him, he has risen to a higher plane of the spiritual life. This is one of the practical paradoxes which appear in the course of life on every side. At any rate a man who takes life seriously will often feel that if some kindly neighbour had merely saved him from the consequences of his own misdeeds, it would have been a very bad thing from the higher point of view. Evil is evil; and yet evil is often turned into an instrument for good. We may consider the parallel case of pain. Pain in the body is in itself a bad thing: yet very often it reveals to us that something is going wrong with our members, that we have taken to wrong ways of feeding or living; and the pain warns us to give them up. If we were to apply to a physician, and he, instead of searching out the root of the evil, merely gave us some anæsthetic to deaden the disquiet, we should embark on a downward course.

And, after all, our knowledge of what is good or bad for us and for our friends is closely limited. We judge very superficially. It often turns out that an event which at the time seemed to be a calamity, has in the end

been one of the milestones of the better life. Considering our shortness of sight, it appears not to be the wisest plan to struggle against all that at the moment offends, but rather to have a large belief in the Providence which shapes our ends, and to be on the watch to discern the indications of a higher purpose which may come to us either through success or through failure.

No doubt, in some things Christianity as it exists may well learn from reasoned ethics. It is an undoubted blot upon many schools of Christianity, and especially upon those prevalent in England, Scotland, and America, that we do not fully realise how greatly an appreciation of natural and human beauty tends to the happiness and health of the world. The reason why Christianity has been dull to this side of life is quite obvious. It arose among the Jews, a people who for historic reasons had quarrelled with and proscribed any representation in art of living things. The Second Commandment of the Decalogue was accepted literally by the Jews, as it is to this day accepted literally by the Mohammedans. Even the Jews were not obtuse to the beauties of natural scenery, as is clearly shown in many of the Psalms. And in the first teaching of Christianity there

breathes, in what is said about birds and flowers, corn-fields and pasture, a very keen sense of natural beauty. All through the history of Christianity this sense has been from time to time conspicuous. On the other hand, the imitative arts of painting and sculpture have not been fully christianised. In particular, the beauty of the human body, and of art representation of man and nature, has not been appreciated by Christianity in its more ascetic and mystic moods. This was the side of revelation committed to the Greeks; and with the ancient Greek race it perished, until the Gospel of Greece was in some degree revived in the Renaissance. Gothic art, however, laid stress on certain aspects of nature, and produced an architecture suited to certain forms of Christianity. There is surely no reason why art should not, in our days, make a closer alliance with Christianity: art will certainly never come to any real understanding with philosophic ethics, which repels the artist by its cold and puritanic tone. This, however, is far too large a subject to be here discussed.[1]

As to the future life, our horizon is fast changing, and it would not be easy to anticipate what part the belief in it will occupy in

[1] Chapter VIII. deals more fully with this matter.

the Christianity of the future. There has been in recent times a great strengthening of the view that to allow the hope of a future life to interfere with plans for ameliorating that which is present would be immoral. Most Christians are disposed to think more of bringing in a state of righteousness into the visible world than of securing bliss in one which lies beyond the grave. But it must be observed—and here popular Christianity is under a complete misapprehension—that a future life occupied but little space in the teaching of the Founder of Christianity. It was a Kingdom of God on earth, and eternal life without particular relation to time, which were the main subjects of Christ's preaching. And it was by degrees, as the early Christians ceased to have a vivid hope of their Master's return in glory to the earth, that the doctrine of the future life for individuals became more powerful in the Church. The modern tendency is therefore in a measure a reversion to the primitive doctrine of Christianity.

On the whole, then, a summary examination shows that we need not be alarmed at the appearance of clashing between ordinary Christian and philosophic ethics. Each in fact has something to learn from the other. Judæa and Hellas are the two great instructors

of mankind: they combined to found the Christian Church, and they must still combine to found the Church of the future.

But the history of ancient civilisation makes it very clear that the coming of Christianity was the saving of the world. Stoic morality had reached a high level, but it affected only the few, and even those few primarily on the intellectual side. Seneca was a great moralist so far as teaching went, but as minister of Nero he was involved in many transactions which were at the best of doubtful character. The end of the Stoic philosophy was a sort of deadlock, beyond which no lines of progress could be seen. But with Christianity there came into the world another spirit, a spirit of active self-devotion, of earnest passion, which transformed every thought and feeling of mankind. Without the Cross, mankind would never have worked out the way to those higher levels of active virtue which are revealed in the best Christian lives, and which make us feel that life is worth living. The essential Christian morality has been justified by the course of history, and often inspires even those who think the current Christian morality in some respects imperfect.

V

MODERNITY IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Of essential religion, at all events in Christendom, the New Testament must always be the text-book, never to be superseded; at most to be interpreted and supplemented. Whatever side we may take in the difficult metaphysical views in regard to the person of the Saviour, however we may differ one from the other as to the comparative values of sacraments and spiritual faith, we shall all find in the teaching of the Saviour, and his immediate successors, an inimitable statement of the nature of religion, of the relation of man to God and to eternal life. But at the same time it is natural and inevitable that some parts of that teaching should be more attractive in appeal, more direct in influence, to one age than to another; that to one church or school one side, and to another another side, of the original teaching of Christianity will seem the most essential

and indispensable. It is the great and inestimable advantage of Christianity that this original teaching is not set forth methodically in any treatise. The weakness of the religion of Islam, the reason of its want of elasticity and of power of growth and self-adaptation, arises from the fact that it has in the Koran a code drawn up by one man and established for all time. The New Testament is quite different. It includes treatises written by many authors, some of whom took one view and some another of the essential teaching of Christianity. The notion that it is of infallible accuracy, that one passage of Scripture can be always "reconciled" with another, is a grotesque misconception. Christianity is not like a graven image, but like a growing tree. And fresh generations alike of students and admirers can always approach it from a fresh side, and find in it what is suited to their needs and aspirations.

Like individuals, churches also come to the fountain of inspiration, and take what they find necessary for life and growth. One branch of the Church will care most about a kindly and active benevolence, another will most highly value, and probably materialise, rite and sacrament, another will make most of a personal relation to the unseen Head of the faith.

I

It is, I think, not difficult to discover the particular feature in the primitive teaching of Christianity which will now make the clearest appeal to progressive minds in the Church. It is a feature which, for obvious reasons, has not been fully appreciated in the past. Some modern theologians have keenly felt its power. I would especially instance Robertson of Brighton, whose utterances are sometimes consciously, but more often unconsciously, inspired by it. It is the sense of law and order in the world of spirit and of conduct, the feeling that as in all countries there is a political constitution, so in this deeper world there is order, fixed relations, a divine kingdom as opposed to the temporal states of the world.

If the change of mental outlook and the increase of knowledge compel us to revise our notion of the ethics of Christianity, it is probable that the change will be in the same direction in which we have modified our Christian belief. In my recent little work, *The Evolution of Christian Doctrine*, I have set forth to the best of my ability the lines on which changes in the intellectual conception of Christianity naturally take place. We have to consider whether parallel changes in the

ethical ideas of Christianity are urgent. I strongly hold that this is the case.

It is clearly the greater fullness and better organisation of knowledge, whether of the physical world of mankind or of history, which has made us reconsider the primitive beliefs of Christianity and reinterpret the creeds. And, similarly, the widely spread and steadily advancing sense among men of a reign of law, of a fixed order in the world, has made us averse from regarding divine control as consisting in sudden and cataclysmic interruptions of the course of events in life and history. We can believe in, and in a measure trace, such control; but it comes in rather as gradually and profoundly working tendencies than as an arbitrary punishment of sin or a direct furthering of human well-being.

To take an obvious example. In past times it would have seemed natural to regard the terrible sufferings inflicted upon the nations of Europe by the great war as a direct divine punishment for transgression. And we sometimes hear men whose minds are at what may be called the cataclysmic stage speculating whether that war has come as a punishment for a laxity of sexual morality, or for intemperance in drink, or for modifying traditional orthodoxy of belief. But one who really

believed in evolution would not think in this fashion. He would try to discover what were really the causes which led to the war as a natural consequence. And while fully believing that the war did not stand outside the scheme of divine government, he would regard the divine control as acting not in independence of physical and moral laws, but through them.

That the latter point of view was that taken by the Founder of Christianity may be seen by his repudiation of the commonly held notion that the eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, were slain as a punishment for their wickedness. To each of the eighteen death came as a crisis in the providential course of their lives, since not even a sparrow could fall to the ground without divine control; but yet the notion that outward and visible misfortune tracked sinners was both superficial and inadequate.

There could not be a more definite statement of the dominance of law in the ethical and human world than is to be found in some of the parables and the sayings of Jesus, especially in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew. They embody the idea of order and fixed sequence. The Pharisees and Sadducees, whose minds were in the cataclysmic stage, were demanding of Jesus a miracle, a sign from heaven.

But he replied that the signs from heaven were not cataclysmic, but came in the regular course of things, to be discerned by all who had eyes. When the Pharisees saw a red glow in the sky at evening they expected a fine day to follow. When in the morning they saw the sky red and lowering they expected a storm. They knew that physical events moved by law; but they did not, Jesus said, see that in the world of history and conduct there was law also. They could not read the signs of the times. A similar warning is given, when the disciples asked what would be the sign of the second coming. "Look," said Jesus, "at the fig-tree: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth her leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh." There could be no more striking example of the wisdom that comes from above, and which belongs to all time, than this emphasis on the parallelism between the visible world of nature and the world of ideas which works gradually through nature.

The same note is struck again and again in the synoptic discourses. "The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things; and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" "By their

fruits ye shall know them." Was there ever a clearer assertion of the rule of law in the human world? By their fruits! Here is an enunciation of the very principle of ethics, the introduction of which in modern times has made a more scientific treatment of morals possible. As I have shown in the last chapters, modern utilitarian views of ethics are often hasty and do not go to the bottom of things. They are not fully baptised into Christ. But they yet mark a great progress from the undeveloped and superficial ethics of the eighteenth century. And their living principle is clearly set forth in the teaching of Jesus. The very essence of them may be found in the profound saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." That saying is as epoch-making in the moral and spiritual sphere as was the work of Galileo in the realm of natural science. Why should we not apply it to a few more modern institutions? Episcopacy was made for man, and not man for Episcopacy. The sacraments were made for man, and not man for the sacraments.

And St Paul, in this as in so many other cases, takes up his Master's teaching, though he sets it differently. "God is not mocked," he writes: "whatsoever a man soweth, that

shall he also reap." Every man's work, he teaches, shall be tried by fire, which shall show of what character it really is. The test will be not a mere cataclysmic decision, but the power of resistance which the work possesses. Again he writes, "He that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the spirit shall of the spirit reap eternal life." The Fourth Evangelist has a very similar phrase, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." We have not yet half exhausted the profound meaning of such utterances.

And we find in the New Testament not only statements of the prevalence of law in the spiritual world, but also a full recognition of the process of evolution in that world. No more exact and satisfying account of Christian ethics can be found than that which is contained in some of the parables of our Lord. The parable of the mustard seed shows how the Christian idea of the way of life will grow and spread, throwing out branches on this side and on that, until it becomes a mighty tree. The parable of the leaven shows that this growth is not one which can be wrought from without, by human wisdom and force, but one which develops from within, producing

gradual changes which in time amount to a complete change of visible character. The parable of the tares shows how always and everywhere evil comes in and mingles itself with what is good, so that life must always be a struggle; and evolution no mere progressive victory of good over evil, but a battle in which now good and now evil seems to be stronger and to have the upper hand, however good be destined to prevail in the end. The parable of the sower shows how the seeds of good often fall on barren and hostile soil, and seem to fail of the end for which they were adapted. The parable of the treasure hidden in a field shows how taking a share in the evolution of the ideal kingdom is the one thing that matters, the thing in comparison with which all earthly advantages and rewards are unworthy of a moment's consideration. Thus the progressiveness, the inwardness, the painfulness, the eternal value of the evolution of the divine kingdom in the world of sense, is set forth as the one thing for which man came into existence, the secret of the universe, the gate leading to eternal life.

This conception of a fixed order and eternal laws in the human as well as in the natural world is an anticipation of all the progress which the modern intellect has made in the

matter of mental and moral psychology. It contains the seeds of a tree which has taken root among us, but the full growth of which belongs to future ages.

As societies rise above the mere savage condition, there gradually dawns upon them the sense of order in the visible world, of fixed uniformities. And as they grasp this idea they find within themselves the power to achieve certain ends which they feel to be desirable. Until they have realised the necessary connection between means and ends, they do not study the means, but try by magic to induce the controlling powers, which even the most savage are able to discern, to bring them success. At first their universe is filled with demons, good and bad, on whose clashings and on whose favour the life and happiness of mankind depend. The best sign of progress towards a less degraded condition is the recognition among them not of a chaos of demons but of an orderly hierarchy of gods, who accept some principles of reason and justice, and may be trusted to treat their votaries in an ethical way. Progress in the religious outlook is soon followed by recognition of law and order in the processes of nature and in the lives of men. And so the horizon of men grows wider, and their view is carried further into the future.

It becomes worth while to take trouble, to undergo toil and hardship, in order to attain benefits in the future. And when there arise great lawgivers, men who can take a comprehensive survey of society, the first steps in the ladder of progress are rapidly taken, a path is begun which leads through the jungle of savagery to the settled cultivated fields of an ordered existence.

Men need not, and indeed usually they do not, give up belief in the working in the world of spiritual forces, but they learn to look upon those forces as reasonable and moral, as working not immediately on the external environment, but inwardly in the spirits of men, giving wisdom and courage, manliness and endurance, enabling men to help themselves, and to lay the foundations of a happier and more assured life.

To those who hold evolutional views in religion certain principles will be clear. They will feel that in each age of the world, in every country, and in every individual life, the divine tendency is in a certain direction, but that it rests with the will of men whether the divine purpose shall take actual form in history or whether it shall be, at least partially, hindered and frustrated. God and man work together in the moulding of history; but God works

through man, and man can only accomplish anything by conforming to the conditions laid down by God as regards the consequences of actions, as well as by divine aid within.

The tendencies to be traced in nature are, so to speak, the rude material on which man has to work, to produce for himself better surroundings. If he plans his action without regard to natural law and tendency, he is sure to fail; these offer him a path to success; but he can only reach success by moving with purpose in the ways which nature offers him. If natural selection works unhindered, progress will be slow. If man tries to carry out purposes, however good ethically, in defiance of natural conditions, there will be no progress at all, but mere failure. But when man does his best, and has practical respect for the ways of nature, then progress may be very rapid.

The history of the world of living things is on the whole a history of improvement. No one would deny that the animal creation in its present state is at a higher level than when the dragons of the prime tore one another to pieces. In this improvement man has in comparatively recent times taken a hand. He has discovered how, by breeding and care, greatly to improve the physique and qualities of some of the animals which surround him.

He knows that spontaneous variations and the survival of the fittest prevent undesirable forms from prevailing in the world, but do not by any means always give wholly good results. Man has to intervene with definite ideals in order that the races of animals may grow in the direction of what is best, or at least in the direction of that which man considers the best.

In himself man has not the power to conquer his external surroundings, and build himself a noble civilisation. But he can put himself on the side of the cosmic power which tends towards good; by self-control and self-surrender he can both learn in what the best good consists, and gain energy to strive towards such good. If he thinks that this rests in the force of his own will and cleverness, he falls back into a condition parallel to that of the savage who thinks that by spell and magic he can compel the spiritual powers to do his bidding. As he has to study the facts of the material world in order that he may develop a material civilisation, so he has to study the ways of the spiritual life, in order that his ends may be worthy of attainment, and suited to produce happiness. This is the teaching of all the great religions of the world, as well as of the developed

philosophy of Greece. And it is the teaching which is enshrined for all time in the New Testament, and is the root-teaching of Christianity as to the Kingdom of God.

Christianity, indeed, adds to it new and wonderful elements. It adds the doctrine of the divine fatherhood, of the love and sympathy which God feels for man. But the higher doctrine of Christianity by no means does away with the more universal principles of religion, which indeed, in the Gospels, are fully set forth in precept and parable.

II

Undoubtedly the main cause of the hatred of England which has of late, to the surprise of many, flamed out in Germany is envy, envy of our wealth and commerce, of our colonies and fleet, of the great position which England has acquired in the world. It is the desire of material wealth and prosperity; and the feeling that England is in these matters the chief impediment in the way. But mingled with this feeling there is another. The view has been sedulously cultivated by German thinkers and statesmen that England has become effete, that she has been corrupted by wealth and prosperity, and has lost the hardy manliness and spirit of adventure by

which her empire was won. Germany, on the other hand, they have taught, is full of energy and efficiency which has no sufficient outlet: whence it is the mission of Germany to thrust England aside, and to take her place. Has there been any justification for this view?

It may fairly be said that this indictment has been answered by the experience of the war. It is clear that any relaxation of moral fibre has only been on the surface. The way in which hundreds of thousands of our young men have volunteered to give up an easy existence, even to abandon wife and child, to meet the horrors of trench warfare, has been a marvel. Our merchant seamen, too, have risked daily not only their lives, but the prospect of starvation in boats on the open sea. And women of all classes have eagerly undertaken national tasks not merely as nurses or workers in factories, but in many occupations quite new to them, and very trying. We need not now defend our country from the charge of effeteness. But yet one feels that in certain directions the German indictment had some justification. Though the heart of the nation was sound, its head was not what it might be. It was deficient in discipline and organisation, in a sense of

the seriousness of facts and the inevitability of their consequences. It had a great dislike to organisation and discipline, and a very imperfect realisation of the need of method and training in every branch of the national life. Of course, in many fields now discipline and method have been forced on us, and a high level of efficiency has been acquired not only in the fighting services but in such matters as the organisation of hospitals and the regulation of supplies. But in many fields, where the stress is less severe, the need of method and organisation has been less fully realised. And a great many people think of the more disciplined ways of living as a mere temporary necessity, which will pass away when peace comes. The mass of English people can scarcely be said yet to have learned the lesson, and to have understood the seriousness not only of the present conflict but of the future stress. Multitudes go on their accustomed ways, as if nothing were changed. Workmen strike, even in the war factories, on small questions of pay or privilege. The expenditure on objects of pure luxury has been enormous. One still sees from the newspapers that in many quarters individualism is rampant. And still people are apt to be indignant rather at the punishment of

crime than at the deeds which caused the punishment.

It is a part of the same mental attitude that instead of giving the utmost pains and care to find out what is really going on in the world, instead of an earnest devotion to reality, we have been content to believe on small evidence, or on no evidence at all, whatever we would like to believe, whatever would absolve us from painful exertions. This is largely the result of trusting the newspapers, instead of believing the verdict of those who really know. The newspapers find that their circulation depends upon their uttering smooth things and concealing all that is really alarming. We trust them as the Jews trusted the false prophets who prophesied smooth things. I am tempted to repeat, though of course without wholly accepting, a very powerful indictment which appeared in an anonymous letter printed in the *Times*,[1] bitter though it be. "The chief characteristic of the ordinary Englishman is not merely a willingness, but an active wish, to believe any sort of rubbish which may happen to suit his whims and prejudices." "Numbers of Englishmen believe (if the word can be used in such a connection) that we are the lost Tribes of Israel. Christian Science has

[1] *Educational Supplement*, 4th April 1916.

made greater progress of late years than all the other forms of religion or religiosity put together. Mr Norman Angell counts his devotees by the hundred thousand. The victims of these crazes, and of countless others of the same sort, closely resemble their politicians: they don't ask for evidence or authority or inherent probability; if the thing takes their fancy, if it fits in with some whim or prejudice or temperamental weakness of their own, they adopt it." "It is certainly safe to say of the majority of Englishmen that, though their instincts are mainly sound, they have no principles, because it has been possible for them to muddle through without thinking of anything. There is nothing an Englishman resents more keenly than being asked to find out what he really believes on any subject, or why he believes it."

I dare not speak in detail of the want of intelligence in the direction of public affairs which has been disclosed in the great war. It is a theme on which it would be easy to dwell. But it would require more knowledge of the actual course of events than I possess. And it might easily degenerate into mere grumbling and fault-finding. It is sufficient to say that the Government itself, in papers published as to the campaigns in Mesopotamia and Gal-

lipoli, has confessed to a want of wisdom and foresight, to a lack of power to see clearly the ends to be aimed at and the means to secure those ends, which may well cause us all to stand aghast. And the reports of Parliamentary Commissions on finance have been appalling revelations. The extraordinary outburst of energy in the people, the vast power of self-devotion in the mass of Englishmen, has been continually counteracted and made fruitless by sheer want of knowledge and of wisdom. What further need is there of witnesses?

This need for more intelligence, and a more rational adaptation of means to ends, applies also, indeed it applies specially, to religion and ethics. Conservatives have been far too ready merely to accept the teaching and the morals of our forefathers. And as a consequence, the spirits of revolt, those who are determined to strike out in a new direction and to seek a new frame of society, have been infinitely too hasty and unbridled. Because so much that will not bear the light of day has been preserved by the framework of the churches and the customs of society, revolt has continually seemed to be progress, and a great many of the young and ardent have been enticed into ways, and have accepted views, which can lead only to great catastrophes and to the

dissolution of society. We have an immense need of wise and thoughtful men to discern between good and evil, between the survivals of what has ceased to be of real use in the world, and the pillars upon which ordered society must necessarily rest. It is as if surgeons, who have found the removal of the appendix in men to lead to a healthier and more vigorous life, were to try experiments in removing organs such as heart and lungs, to see whether they also are unnecessary. Physiologists tell us that the eye is full of defects as an organism; what if oculists were to begin by removing our eyes in the hope of providing some seeing apparatus of a more scientific and effective kind, instead of trying by spectacles, by microscopes and telescopes, gradually to improve our powers of sight? Russia has lately given to the world a notable example of the practical results of a triumph of nihilism, of the view that the defective arrangements of society have only to be cleared away, and that a better order will naturally evolve itself. There is in the world of art and of literature, and to a great degree in the world of morals and conduct, an almost complete chaos. Society is drifting blindly it knows not whither.

If one looks to history in the past, one finds

the record full of warnings. There is no need to deny the thesis that if God pleased he might apply a rapid and drastic cure to the evils from which men suffer. But we know that he does not interfere, in cataclysmic fashion, to set things right. He does not act like a foolish and indulgent parent who is constantly standing between his children and the natural fruits of their deeds. But he acts like a wise and stern father who when his children have fallen into misfortune through contravening his commands or his advice, allows them to taste the consequences. That is, until they repent, for there is another side to the matter; the kindness and mercy of God are as real as his sternness: as to this I shall have more to say in the chapter on forgiveness. But if, having the gift of free-will, men insist on doing the wrong thing, they are sure to suffer for a time. And such punishment, in the fixed order of the world, falls as often on those who fail through want of wisdom and care, as on those who err from desire of evil and contempt for the good. The moral guilt of the latter may be greater; and those who believe in a future life will hold strongly to the view that the punishment for involuntary but foolish doing of wrong will not in the long run be so heavy as the

punishment of those who loved and embraced sin. And this is the Gospel teaching, "That servant which knew his lord's will and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." But not to find out the lord's will, when it was ascertainable, was in itself a sin; indolence and stupidity which one might have cured are of the nature of a crime, and fully deserve punishment. In our law courts ignorance of the law is no excuse for the transgressor. And the violation of natural law is punished, in the constitution of the universe, whatever excuse there may be for the violator.

I venture to think that, at present, there is no duty more incumbent upon those who have acquired some knowledge of moral and spiritual laws than the duty of trying to raise the intellectual standard, and to bring in a clearer sense of law, and a determination to produce better organisation. Those who make the attempt must not expect to be popular. The popular man is he who is kindly and easy-going, and lets people have what they want. Yet such an one often tends greatly to lower the ethical tone of those about him; while the man of stricter principle and heart more

hardened, perhaps not by nature but by conviction, will probably do far more in the long run, even for the happiness of the people among whom he lives.

Biologists tell us that there have been certain ages in the history of living things, and even in the history of mankind, when evolution proceeded more rapidly and effectually than in ordinary times. Strain and stress prevailed; and the classes of living things which were unequal to the strain, which had not in them a power to meet rapidly changing conditions, could only perish. By their loss the world for a time was no doubt poorer; but nevertheless a higher level of development became possible.

Such a time of stress is the age in which we live; indeed, there probably never was an age of such rapid and fundamental change in political and social life; even before the great war this was clear. And a supreme necessity, alike for nations and for individuals, is a development in the organisation of society and in the power of intelligence. Good-natured and easy-going ways, however charming they may be, will no longer serve. We must take things seriously. We must improve education, all the way up from the primary school to the university. That is the most obvious need;

but it is by no means the only one. In science, in politics, in all the arrangements of society, we have to rise to a higher level of intelligence; to use our brains, to study the courses and the ends of things, to learn what really takes place in the world, rather than what we would wish to take place.

No doubt this assertion needs to be guarded, since superior intelligence may be used either for good or for evil; and nothing seems to us so utterly diabolical as great intelligence devoted to the harm and not to the benefit of mankind. But nevertheless, unless all progress in the world is a delusion, mental as well as moral improvement is in the line of divine action among men. Wisdom, as well as goodness, is a gift from above, a trust to be made use of. And mere goodness of heart, apart from wisdom and intelligence, is responsible for much of the evil of the world.

If we had been more familiar with our Bibles we could not have lost sight so completely as we have of the fact that alike in the Jewish and the Christian scriptures the enlightenment of the understanding, and more especially wisdom in the practical conduct of life, is constantly spoken of as a gift of the Divine Spirit, which is not only a power of energy but also of illumination. According

to the author of *Job*, it is the inspiration of the Almighty which gives men understanding. According to Isaiah, the Spirit of God is the spirit of wisdom and understanding. The Fourth Evangelist teaches that the divine wisdom was impersonated in Jesus Christ, and that this is the light which enlightens not only followers of Christ, but every man who comes into the world. In the Pauline epistles the same theme is repeatedly taken up. Paul urges his converts to pray not only with the spirit but with the understanding also, and he declares that he would rather in the assemblies of the church speak five words with understanding, to enlighten his hearers, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. He even places preachers and teachers at a higher level of spiritual value than workers of miracles and faith-healers. The widely prevalent modern view that religion has to do with emotion rather than with wisdom in thought and action is utterly opposed to the teaching of the great Apostle. I cannot here elaborate this theme; but it greatly needs dwelling on.

But it is time to turn to the other side. We may venture to feel confident that though classes of the community had become slack, yet the nation had not become effeminate. To begin with, there are in every country pur-

suits so arduous that those engaged in them are kept hard. The battle with the ground and the weather for the fruits of the earth keeps the peasantry strong and healthy. The sea remains stormy and treacherous, and this has served to keep our sailors and fishermen from effeminacy. The custom of primogeniture which has exposed the younger sons of well-to-do families to the battle of life, and the growing poverty of the clergy, have given us a supply of adventurous youths, with their way to make in the world. India has been a field in which the manly virtues of Englishmen have readily flourished; and the strenuous life forced on emigrants to the British Dominions beyond the seas has saved many of our roving youths.

Even our enemies must allow that England is not effete. But at the same time, in the severe and trying days which are coming upon us, we shall need great changes in the national life if we are to keep our place among the nations. We shall need more seriousness, a diminished love of pleasure, and better social organisation. And above all, we shall need a clearer realisation of the dominion of law in the universe, that men reap as they sow, and cannot avoid the consequences of carelessness and folly. As man gains more and more

control of nature and society, God commits to him more and more responsibility for the conduct of affairs. He has to put away childish things and consider in a manful spirit the consequences of his actions.

However the war may end, we are only at the beginning of a great struggle. Burdened by enormous debts, deprived of a great proportion of their ablest men, the nations of Europe have to reconstruct not only national wealth but the very framework of society. And it can only be done by a better and more thorough knowledge, and a more complete use of it in social construction. But knowledge and organising power will fail unless the peoples accept more worthy principles of conduct than have usually prevailed in the past. Secularist ideals of life, and the conventional Christian ethics of the Churches, must both give way to a new application of the great principles of Christianity combined with clearer perception of moral law in the world.

III

I will pass on to notice one or two other tendencies in ethics which have become more prominent in consequence of the changed ways of thought. I can only treat of them very slightly, but even that may be worth while.

It seems to me that in the ethics of the coming age two ideas, both of them very prominent in the early Christian teaching, must have more vogue than they have had in the past.

The first is the idea that morality is not merely an individual thing, but social. Men are not at bottom detached units, but members of the human race, and they belong also to smaller units, a church or a nation. Collective morality is, it must be confessed, not conspicuous in the Gospels, but it has by no one been taught more brilliantly than by St Paul. He tells us that we are all members of one body, having need one of another, that when one member suffers all the others suffer with it, that one blood runs through the whole, and each man reaches his own highest development in correlating his activity with that of others. St Paul, of course, is speaking of the Church, of the corporation of which Christ is the head. But the same principles may be, by a legitimate extension, applied to each of us as a member of a society or a country or a city.

This idea of social ethics has in some countries, and especially in England and Scotland, been too much lost sight of. Individual morality and individual religion have been overdone. Hence the widely-spread notion that a man's conscience is to him an infallible

guide; and that, in following it, he is responsible only to God. We are ready enough to condemn the German writers who teach the absolute dominance of the State, that the State is above morality, and has only to consider its own interests. But we often fall into the opposite fault of denying to any community the right of dictating the conduct of individuals. As to this I shall have something to say in future chapters.

To dwell on all the unpleasant fruits of our own exaggerated individualism would take me too far. I can only say that everyone who loves his country or his church must be glad to see the current setting in the other direction. Whether or not we consider ourselves as belonging to the socialists, at all events a certain leaven of socialism is everywhere working and fomenting. And no new scheme of ethics is likely to attract the younger generation which does not treat man in society as well as man in isolation as the unit.

The second notable tendency in modern ethics is to dwell rather on the positive than the negative aspect of goodness. This also is thoroughly Christian. It is as prominent in the teaching of the Synoptic Gospels as the idea of the Church is in the Pauline Epistles. We need but remember the discourse of the

Saviour with the rich young man, who had been keeping the commandments from his youth up, had been perfect on the negative side of morality, but was not ready to hear the injunction "Sell all thou hast, and follow Me." Islam teaches more completely than Christianity the duty of acquiescing in the will of God; but Christianity lays most stress not on abstaining from evil, and accepting the will of God, but on active and enthusiastic co-operation with it for the service of men. The respectable people, the cultivators of regular schemes of conduct, come off in the Gospels very badly compared with the repenting sinner, the returning prodigal, the woman whose sins were forgiven because she loved much.

I suppose that in times of prosperity and peace the negative virtues have more vogue; and that, when there is a strong call to action, and passions, good and bad, are awaked in the hearts of the people, positive and active virtue comes by its own. There arises among those writers who appeal most strongly to the general feeling, a tendency to lay more stress on enthusiastic forms of goodness. The soldiering, in which every man depends for life on the constancy and courage of his neighbours, has given a stimulus alike to social and to active

morality, as contrasted with mere blamelessness and individual virtue.

It must be confessed that in our English Prayer Book too much stress is laid on merely negative virtue. To go no further than the General Confession and Absolution, which we are supposed to repeat twice every day, we find these negations in almost exclusive possession. "That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous and sober life." "That the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy." This is good in its way; but it is scarcely the highest note; and its perpetual iteration is somewhat wearisome. Might we not sometimes pray for a more active, a more devoted life, instead of for one which is merely righteous? We must remember the saying of Jesus, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Yet the Pharisees were at the time the most "godly, righteous, and sober" of all the Jews.

In a very instructive book, *The Church in the Furnace*, we read how the ordinary prayers of the Church seem to lack emotion, point, actuality, when recited among the scenes of war. The spirit of mere abstention seems there to be inadequate. And if we turn to

nonconformist religion, we shall see how that too, in a different way, lays too much emphasis on mere abstention, on refraining from drink, and from bad language and the other vices into which ardent and impetuous youth is apt to fall. Not of course that those vices are to be condoned; but that by far the easiest and best way to overcome them is to drive them out by a higher purpose and ethical enthusiasm.

The intellectual basis for a more active tendency in ethics is not wanting, has indeed been working in the world of thought for some time past, especially in the writings of men like William James and Bergson, who have laid stress on the one side on the importance of that general ground of human society which we call the unconscious, and who on the other side have insisted that in men the active and conative side is primary, the reflective and intellectual secondary. It is a phenomenon which we often note in history, and which is a clear proof of the doctrine of Providence, that when a demand comes for particular qualities in a people, or men of a certain type, it is found that deep-seated movements in the unconscious substratum of life, often reflected in the brains of great thinkers, have already made preparation for the production of such qualities in the people,

or such types of men. Thus the dynamic and positive, as contrasted with the static and negative view of goodness, comes in to fill a space which had already been prepared for it by the writings of great thinkers, who discovered fundamental principles, and made ready, as it were, a concrete platform, on which the great guns could rest.

As is usually the case, the popular literature of the time grasps the view which underlies the tendency of thought, and magnifies it into caricature. Writers like H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw pour unmeasured scorn on mere respectability, on abstention from transgression of the rules of society. Passion and resolve which lead men and women to defy their surroundings and to pursue at any cost the impulses which surge up from unconscious depths of the spirit, are by them eagerly justified. They make the reader feel that mere inhibition of impulse, based on respect for propriety, is a base and poor thing. William James, in a notable, and very bold, passage, ventures to defend, in a degree, even hard drinking, as a triumph of the active energies over mere prudence and respectability, a victory of conation over inhibition. All this is an exaggeration and caricature, but at least it shows that in the minds of readers there is a general

feeling against such restraints of convention and custom as dwarf and deaden the active spirit.

And the war has, beyond doubt, had a driving power in the same direction. Soldiers have found that the men who force upon them admiration and confidence are most usually those who may have many faults, but have also a great and active power of self-devotion. The virtues of the battle-field are of a very active and stirring kind. After all, is not this only a new illustration of the great Christian saying, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much"? It is time that the thick crust of convention and respectability which had covered Christian ethics should be violently broken up.

The three principles which I have mentioned:—the recognition of law and order in the ethical and spiritual world; the social and corporate nature of virtue; the predominance of active over mere passive or abstentional goodness,—these seem to me to be the most notable features of modernist Christian ethics. I do not mean that they are the only important features, but they seem to have a primacy. But there is a practical question to be considered.

Can an intellectual study of the divine will and a determination to love and follow it be

treated as separate matters? Must they not be closely related? To put the matter in more concrete form: can the impulse to the Christian life of devotion to the divine will be transferred, with the progress of knowledge, from one religious atmosphere to another? Can the ethics of Christendom be transformed while the life of Christendom goes on with undiminished energy? Can we keep the sanctions and the enthusiasms of Christianity, while altering the whole scale of Christian thought in relation to God and man, and the incarnation of God in man? Can the life of Christ in the Church and in individuals be carried on with energy and happiness under the intellectual conditions of the new age?

This question has not only to be thought out, but also to be lived out. It rests with Christians who are convinced modernists to prove that their modernism is consistent with Christian hope, faith, and conduct. The experiment is being tried, day by day and hour by hour. The world and the future await the result. If a new Reformation is possible, it must be attained by courage, self-devotion, and self-suppression. If it is not possible, we are in presence of an internecine struggle in the Christian world between science and faith, between what we know and what we

would fain believe. In that case we shall undoubtedly have in the future many revivals of Christianity, but they will more and more take the form of reversions to old types. Their gaze will necessarily be turned towards the past rather than towards the present and the future. This has been the case with the Roman Catholic revival on the Continent, and with the Anglo-Catholic revival in this country. So great is the power of the essential Christian faith over the heart of man, that no mere enlightenment of the intellect will take its place, or reconcile many classes of the people to its loss. They will be willing to accept the most unsatisfactory mental compromises rather than give it up.

But if, on the other hand, there turns out to be a possibility of combining Christian faith and hope and an active Christian life in the world with the fullest growth of intellectual clarity, and a hearty acceptance of the idea of evolution in all the phases of human life, then there will come such a reinforcement of the power of the Church that she will dominate life as she has not dominated it since the thirteenth century. Her sails will be full at the same time that her rudder is steady in wise hands, and she will sail victoriously towards the haven of the Kingdom of God.

VI

THE CHRISTIAN LAW OF CHARITY

It would be a great and a noble task to set forth in detail how, just as Christian belief and doctrine have taken on new forms in consequence of modern progress in science, both natural and human, so Christian ethics need also to be revised in the clearer light of fuller knowledge. But such a task would be far beyond the scope of a little book like the present one, which is intended rather to provoke thought than to satisfy its demands. All that I can here hope to accomplish is to take one or two recognised Christian virtues, and to show how, without losing their Christian character, they may be adapted to a changed world. And I hope that it will appear that often such adaptation, instead of taking them further from the original and root teaching of Christianity, will bring them nearer to it. What is really wanted is to free the Christian

ideals of conduct from the trammels of the dark ages of the Church.

I

The first Christian grace or virtue of which I propose to speak is the greatest and most distinctive of all — charity. This virtue is beyond dispute one of the greatest of gifts which Christianity has bestowed on the world. And, since the corruption of the best is the worst, it might have been expected that a misunderstanding and misuse of this most divine of graces would have been the worst source of corruption, when the true nature of charity was misunderstood, and its working perverted. I am not under the delusion that the interpretation which I have to maintain is new to the history of Christian thought, or cannot be found in the writings of eminent Christian authors, yet I assert without hesitation that the doctrine of Christian charity, as taught from many pulpits and as accepted by the mass of the laity in England, is quite contrary to the real spirit of the religion, and by no means consonant with the teaching, so far as we can recover it, of the Founder of Christianity and the greatest of the Apostles, St Paul. It is full of the corruption which undoubtedly came upon the Church in the

Middle Ages and even earlier, and it needs a thorough revision before it can be reconciled with ethical progress.

The teaching of Jesus in regard to love to mankind is set forth admirably by many writers, by none more eloquently and with more insight than by the author of *Ecce Homo*. What the Founder taught, exemplified in his life, and breathed into his society, was a love for man, into which the love of God entered as a transforming force. It was the divine in man, as distinguished from the characteristics of individuals, which was the object of the passion of appreciation and affection lying at the root of all his utterances in regard to human beings. All were alike the children of God, and objects of the love and care of the Heavenly Father. And thus all were brothers, and anything in contradiction to this relation was an offence against the spiritual constitution of the world. Jesus bade his followers in the first place to love God with all their soul, and in the second place to love their neighbours as themselves. But this clearly implies a lofty and spiritual standard in the love of one's neighbour. For no disciple, in so far as he was a disciple, would merely aim at his own happiness and worldly prosperity; rather, as Wordsworth writes, "would make his moral

being his prime care." So also in the case of other people, he would wish to promote in them not what was lower and of the earth, but what was highest and best.

It is scarcely necessary to cite passages from the Gospels to establish this thesis. Some of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount may be held to have, in their literal sense, a temporary bearing. But one principle lies at the base of it all. It implies in every line that mere temporal and worldly advantage is not to be compared with a right attitude towards God. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things—food, raiment, and the rest—shall be added to you." There is again the parable of the self-satisfied rich man, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, but is not rich towards God." "Fear not them that kill the body." But I need not go on. The whole teaching of Jesus is based on what would now be called a transvaluation of values, on looking at all the affairs of life in the light of eternity.

And we have the golden rule that every man should behave to others as he would wish others to behave to him. No follower of Jesus could wish that others in their conduct towards him would flatter his worldliness or gratify his evil desires; and the same

standard is set up for his reciprocal actions on others.

We may, however, see at least the traces of a line of distinction. The conduct of the disciples one to the other was not to be the same as their conduct towards those outside the society. To the outer world a disciple was to appear as a perennial source of gentleness, kindness, and consideration. He was to be like the sun which shines on the evil and the good, like the rain which falls as much on the lands of unjust men as on those of the just. He was to imitate the ways of the Father in Heaven in being to all around him a source of gladness. On this line stand the wonders of healing which are so marked an element in the synoptic gospels, and the reality of which, after allowance for inaccurate tradition, can scarcely be denied. Pain and sickness were to the Master as clearly evils as was sin, though of course in an infinitely less degree. To set them right was to carry out in the world the will of God. Jesus holds in high value happiness, so long as it is in accord with nature, and not harmful to the soul.

But in the discourses more directly dealing with conduct towards other members of the little society we may find a higher and a sterner tone. "If thy right eye causeth thee

to offend, pluck it out and cast it from thee." And the corollary is clear: if thy brother's eye cause him to offend, help him to cast it out. For him also it is better to enter into life having one eye than to die having two. The man who is willing to lose a limb in order that his life may be saved, is naturally anxious that the same mutilation should take place in others, if the same end may be attained. But Jesus, with the sweet reasonableness which is so marked a feature in his teaching, sees clearly the dangers which may attend such a reading of the love of one's neighbours. He sees that it may lead to a harsh and censorious spirit, combined with self-righteousness. Therefore he adds a caution, that those who see a mote in a brother's eye, which it would be a kindness to remove, must beware lest there be a worse defect in their own eye, which may interfere with clear vision. Everyone must feel how necessary is the caution, how easy it is to be blinded by prejudice and partiality in judging what is the best and highest for one's neighbour. The best corrective is the sinking of the individual or subjective point of view in that of the society as a whole. The first impulse of the Apostles when they left all worldly goods to follow their Master, was to invite their friends

to do the same. The society was one in heart; what applied to one applied to all. The self-surrender of each man was a part of the self-surrender of all. It is the common feeling of all, the relation of all to the life of the society, which is the basis and the essence of Christian charity, as it makes its first appearance in history.

The word charity (ἀγάπη) occurs in the synoptic gospels; but it is in the sense of love of God, or love of mankind in general. The only exception is in Matt. xxiv. 12, in a phrase which probably does not come from Jesus himself.[1] As is often pointed out, it is in the writings of St Paul that the term is appropriated to the special affection which Christians feel, or should feel, one for another. It was natural that, when the outline of the society was hardening, and it was becoming more distinct from the world outside, the special tie binding believers together should be more clearly recognised. To St Paul, charity is the queen of all virtues, the essential impulse without which a man cannot be a Christian. It is the superhuman gift to the Church, the connection of disciple with disciple, and of the disciples taken together with their Master in heaven. It is an impulse towards gentleness,

[1] "The love of many shall wax cold."

kindness, self-sacrifice. The hymn in which St Paul sings its praises is a reflection and an embodiment of the spirit which conquered the world, and ushered in a new condition of society.

No doubt, when the Christian Church ceased to be a small society of devoted believers and became a world-wide institution, charity in the Pauline sense necessarily became an ideal to be aimed at rather than a virtue which might be grasped. By expanding so as to include the whole community, good and bad, faithful and faithless, charity necessarily lost its first fervour and waxed comparatively cold. The ardent love of which St Paul speaks might possibly exist in small societies of believers who felt that they were united as one soul against a hostile world, but as a matter of history it never has existed in large and mixed communities. The Pauline ideal is high, and we cannot attain to it; though the few who have in a measure exemplified it in their lives shine like the stars in heaven.

II

But when we come to speak of charity as now regarded among us, what a terrible bathos! The word is used mainly in two senses. First, it is applied to the giving of

alms, the contribution of money to various philanthropic agencies. And second, it is applied to a broad toleration of notions and of customs which we disapprove. In order to measure the depth of the degradation to which the word has fallen, we must investigate the relation of these two uses to the primitive teaching of Christianity.

St Paul is guarded in his precepts as to almsgiving. He made collections for poor members of the Church at Jerusalem. And at a time when every member knew the circumstances and character of every other member it was easy to avoid abuses. But he also writes a command which goes to the root of the matter. "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat." In spite of that injunction, almsgiving in the Church became an abuse, and we find in the *Didachê* very sensible cautions against giving indiscriminately. "If," it says, "the teacher ask for money, he is a false prophet." And again, "Let thine alms sweat into thine hands till thou know to whom thou givest."

To what abuses the giving of indiscriminate alms led in the Middle Ages, all who know anything about those times are aware. The systematic pauperisation of the people was regarded by the monasteries and the clergy in general as the carrying out of a divine law.

The popular feeling in regard to almsgiving was expressed in the saying, "It takes away the holy use of charity to examine wants."[1] The obvious self-denial in giving was the one thing thought of; and the harm done to the recipients was not considered. Charity of this kind is a refined form of selfishness. Not only in the Middle Ages did it often corrupt and demoralise the people, but it did not even produce gratitude in them. "It is false to suppose that, because the religious houses were bound to distribute alms liberally, they were popular with their neighbours and tenants."[2] The very contrary was the case. This reckless almsgiving is a hydra of which it seems useless to cut off the head, for it has an infinite power of self-renewal. One would have thought that the great Report of the Poor Law Commission in the last generation would have scotched the mischief for a century at least; but it is still at work. Pauperisation is still going on; and the result is now, as in the Middle Ages, to provoke not a friendly gratitude but anger and contempt. No one speaks more angrily of popular "charity" than some of the labour leaders.

There is one phrase in the Pauline doctrine

[1] Fletcher's *Pilgrim*, Act I., Sc. i.

[2] Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, p. 161.

of charity which is often overlooked, "Charity worketh no ill to its neighbour"[1]—and it is very certain that a great deal of the money now given in ways which are termed charitable does great and irreparable harm to our neighbours, in encouraging idleness and thriftlessness, and destroying manly independence. To people constituted as we are now, and having money enough to meet all urgent needs, it is far easier to give small doles to anyone who seems to be in want than to refuse. And the result of the giving of doles, as has been proved a thousand times in history, is the production of a class of feckless and demoralised wanderers, averse to work of any kind; whose lives alternate between want of necessaries and coarse indulgence. It is also greatly to be feared that many of the more guarded and systematic kinds of charity produce in a more insidious way the same evil results. All this would be allowed by anyone who had considered the working of fact and tendency. That the words of the experienced are so little regarded by the general public is a cause of widespread demoralisation. The name of Christian charity is used to excuse conduct which is utterly opposed to the essential teaching of Christianity.

[1] Romans xiii. 10.

The art of writing begging letters has become, as I know from personal inquiries, a means of earning a considerable income for a number of years. The recipients of such letters, in place of making inquiry, send money whenever their feelings are touched. And it is not only the writers of the letters who are thus helped on the downward road, but a multitude of others, who are trying to make an honest living, but are tempted into the ways of deceit and demoralisation. Few people realise what great and growing harm may be wrought by the reckless giving of even a few pounds. And the number of societies all working independently of one another, and often started by ladies who merely want something to do, tends directly to the encouragement of pauperism and of vice.

There is of course another side to the matter. One may merely shut up one's heart and one's pocket, and decline to give to all charities because one has found some to be pernicious. Many people go from one of these extremes to the other. The true line of conduct, in this as in other social matters, can only be found by taking trouble, and "letting the alms sweat into the hand." To give without doing harm is difficult, but it is not impossible. And those who wish to

acquire the art can find advice in the writings of those who have long laboured at it. What I wish at present to emphasise is the truth that reckless giving may be a sign of worldly good-nature, but it is entirely opposed to the principle of Christian charity as laid down in the original teachings of Christianity. It is only by looking rather at words than at principles that the custom of reckless giving can be held to be really Christian.

III

The other misinterpretation of the principle of charity which I have mentioned is quite as great an evil. There is a notion abroad that a wide and almost unlimited toleration is Christian in principle. Not only in speculative opinions, but even in principles of action, to be indifferent, to think that one view is probably almost as good as another, to allow everyone to go undisturbed his own way, is often regarded as a mark of charity and Christian feeling. People say, "It will be all one a hundred years hence," and so dismiss questions of right and wrong, of good and bad ways of action. What could be a grosser caricature of a religious teaching which insists upon the enormous importance of right and wrong action, and their results for good and

evil? If a man plucks out his right eye to avoid offending, surely it matters to him to the end of his days. And if that was really the better alternative, the results of the action to avoid which he plucked out his right eye must also be permanent.

It is often regarded as an instance of charity to tolerate any form of opinion which is not immediately inconsistent with recognised morality. If a man preached polygamy or the free use of opium, it would hardly be regarded as a part of charity to be indifferent to his views; but short of such extremes, it is often thought that we should let anyone advocate any views in religious and social matters without thinking the worse of him.

In matters of knowledge and science, this attitude may be a good one. Science requires the open mind, the white light, and any suspicion of prepossession is distrusted by those who have the true scientific spirit. But in the case of all beliefs and opinions which have any close relation to life and action, indifferentism is not a worthy frame of mind. It is of course very difficult in these days to find out how far a man really believes the views which he expresses. The desire to talk smartly, and to amuse, is so generally prevalent in conversation, that men often profess even

radically immoral opinions from the mere love of novelty and paradox. They would be shocked at the notion of carrying them into practice. It does not do to take too seriously the light effervescence which is a help to social intercourse. But if we look at matters deliberately it cannot in principle be denied that one's words should correspond with one's real beliefs.

Outside the domain of science and purely intellectual views, there is in the nature of things, and there should be manifest in a really healthy society, a close relation between thought and action. If a belief is worth holding, it is bound to lead to certain kinds of conduct. And if it is worth holding, it is also worth advocating, and if need be suffering for. If then a belief is when carried into action injurious to society, its expression cannot be indifferent to those who care about the good of society. To tolerate it is not charity, but a sign either of indifference to good and evil or of cowardice. No doubt a man who sets himself up to judge and condemn all the beliefs which he does not share may easily make himself ridiculous. In this case, as in others, tact and moderation are needful if social intercourse is to be maintained. But one may have a very strong sense of what is

good and what is evil without being ready always to criticise and attack. And this is the true procedure of charity.

IV

I have spoken negatively of Christian charity, of the abusive use of the term, and the spirit which wrongly claims to be that of charity. Cannot one venture to be in turn somewhat more constructive, and to sketch the true line of the charitable life? I will venture in all modesty to make the attempt, speaking first of charity as a feature of all true religion, and then of Christian charity in particular.

Charity is, in fact, thought, feeling, and action in accord with the true relation of men one to another as members of a spiritual realm and children of a divine parent. Such a relation exists, whether we recognise it or not. But when we are enabled to see it, we learn that it drives us to adopt certain courses of conduct. And those who by the divine spirit feel within them a glow of brotherhood, adopt those courses with joy and gladness. There then arises within the enthusiasm of humanity. Those who are most fully inspired by that enthusiasm find their happiness in spending their lives in the pursuit of some great good for the sake of their brethren.

But the good of our neighbour may be sought in various ways. It may be sought by what may be called the way of secular benevolence. We may look around us and see what men do actually desire and work for, and try to promote these ends with all our power. Almost all men have some kindly feeling; he who has none is a monster. And by the very constitution of our nature, the promotion of happiness in others is the surest way of attaining happiness for ourselves. The man who is in this sense an altruist is beloved by all, is honoured in his lifetime and lamented when he dies. He does not make any demands upon his neighbours, but is always helping them towards the things which they desire to reach. He is sure, in some measure, to attain the end which he sets before him. If men could be made permanently happy by an improvement of outward conditions, if by securing for all more of the things they desire the level of life could be definitely raised, then there would be no more to be said. The benevolent altruist would be the true saint, the man most fully in accord with the purposes of the Maker of the world.

But a mere experience of the world, quite apart from definite religious belief, soon shows

that it is a misreading of the facts of human nature to suppose that the world can be made happy by mere human kindness. We know that spoiled children are not in the long run benefited by the spoiling. We know that those who have most of this world's goods are not the happiest people. We know how many of the things which men ordinarily desire are like apples of Sodom, which turn to ashes in the mouth. We know how the way to higher happiness often lies through suffering, and how far more perfect a thing blessedness is than mere enjoyment.

This, then, is the result of the experience of life. And Christianity by a divine intuition advocates the same truth, which is set forth for all time in the paradoxes of the Sermon on the Mount, which define the true nature of blessedness, and show at what a height it stands above the attainment of mere material good. If a man were an ox, he would reach the highest bliss of which he is capable through skilful crossing of breeds, combined with the best pasture and the finest stables. But the spiritual element in him is fatal to so easy an attainment of happiness, which he is obliged to seek by longer and more difficult courses.

It is benevolence towards mankind added

to and pervaded by a sense of spiritual relations which makes up Christian charity. Charity implies a higher and a lower level of life, the existence of a happiness which cannot be attained by indulgence of desire, either one's own desires or those of others. It implies an ideal element in life as the purpose and end of man's existence. It implies a love for man as man, but especially for the higher and divine element in man.

It must be added that charity implies agreement of the will of man with that of God. For if there be any meaning in creation, if the long history of evolution, beginning with a nebula in space and leading up to civilised man, is not a purposeless phantasmagoria, then God wills and greatly desires the improvement and spiritualisation of man, to which the whole process of the ages leads up. We can take our place in the spiritual world only by doing the work assigned to us at birth, and helping others to do the work assigned to them. In thus realising the brotherhood of souls and the need for bringing every soul nearer to the source of all souls, we accomplish the true law of charity.

The Christian Church is a society built upon this foundation. It is, as the author

of *Ecce Homo* insisted, primarily a great ethical society, the object of which is to promote the doing in the world of the will of God. In the course of time it has been strangely warped from this object in one direction and another, but it has never wholly lost sight of the original end. At present in England there is very prevalent a notion that the external comfort and well-being of the people is an affair of the Church; but that so long as Christians behave with outward decency their maxims of conduct are their own affair, and not the business of the Church. The ethical ideas, the urging of which is the main purpose of the synoptic gospels and the Pauline epistles, are too seldom mentioned in the pulpit or in the discussions of Convocation and the Church Societies.

I cannot think that the standing aside of the churches in ethical matters is a satisfactory phenomenon, or one destined to be permanent. I fully agree with the preface to the Commination Service in our Prayer Book, that it is greatly to be desired that more ethical discipline should be exercised by modern churches. But the Commination Service, with its strongly Hebraic and archaic character, is sadly out of date. Nor is it likely

that the Western world will, as things stand, agree to place such discipline in the hands of the clergy. John Wesley, with his usual insight into things spiritual, introduced into his society the discipline of the class-meeting, to be a kind of democratic confessional. But the class-meeting, I understand, is in these days sadly diminished in dignity and usefulness; and it may be doubted whether it can be revived.

But setting aside the question of the possibility of any external and authoritative discipline, surely in all Christian societies in which the spirit of the Founder still bears sway, the relations of the members one to another ought not to fall to the low and unspiritual level which ordinarily holds in worldly society. Every Christian who worships Christ and sometimes partakes of the Christian Communion must feel a spiritual tie binding him to his fellow-Christians of a different and a more sacred character than that of civil society. On this subject, however, it is impossible here to enlarge.

VII

THE CHRISTIAN LAW OF FORGIVENESS

The weak-kneed and sentimental view of Christianity, which accepts the divine kindness but not the divine justice, which believes in heaven but neither in purgatory nor hell, was lately very rife in England. It cannot but have been severely checked by the terrible experiences of late years. I propose in the present chapter to consider it in reference to the Christian law of forgiveness, forgiveness both divine and human.

I

In rude and stern ages,[1] such as our race has passed through, when barbarian passions were hard to restrain, and men were ready to persecute and even put to death those whom they

[1] Parts of the following pages are taken from an article in the *Modern Churchman*, vol. iv. (1915).

regarded as having done them some kind of harm, it might well be the duty of Christian leaders to urge upon their followers beyond all other virtues, gentleness, mildness, slowness to take offence. When St Paul preached those virtues, the Christians were a small band in the midst of a great heathen population, and the exercise of the gentler virtues was almost a necessity of their existence. By such virtues the Church diminished the hostility of its foes, and bound its members together in close union. By such virtues the Christian missionaries fascinated the fierce barbarians of the north, and the clergy built up a new and stable form of polity in the countries where Roman civilisation was decaying. But the opposite vice to that of barbarous fierceness is in England now more perilous to us. Moral anæmia, the lack of fixed principles of conduct, conformity to fashions which cut across the paths of right and wrong; these are our besetting sins, and perhaps the same Christian religion which quelled the vices of barbarism may furnish a remedy against those of over-civilisation.

I may perhaps best illustrate the difference between humanity and indifference if I discuss in more detail the working of the two in the matter of the forgiveness of injuries. Here perhaps as much as anywhere we may discern

how the spread of moral laxity and intellectual indolence wars against real Christian ethics. We often hear a man say, "So and so did me an injury; but I did not resent it; I practised the Christian virtue of forgiveness." Here we reach the root of the matter. What then is the Christian teaching in regard to forgiveness? There is in the Gospel no more clear and decided teaching than is recorded in regard to this matter.

In the Sermon on the Mount there is certainly preached the way of non-resistance to evil. And if a man or a society consistently and literally follows that teaching, that man or society will be in closer relation to the Founder of Christianity than other people. If a man turns the left cheek to one who smites him on the right, gives his cloak to one who has robbed him of his coat, bestows without inquiry his goods upon all who ask of him, takes no thought whatever for the morrow, such a man may be one of the great spiritual heroes of the world. In history we know of some who have thus acted consistently; in the history of Christianity St Francis is perhaps the nearest. For such the question of forgiveness of injuries could not arise; for, not opposing or resenting injuries, they could have nothing to forgive.

But in various parts of the synoptic teaching the doctrine of forgiveness, as it applies to the ordinary Christian living in the world, and not practising the doctrine of non-resistance, is set forth in the clearest way possible. That it should have been, in the course of Christian history, so often and so bitterly misunderstood, and so little practised, may well seem a marvel. To begin with, in the Lord's Prayer, and the verses which follow in Matthew, the great principle of it is distinctly formulated. It is placed on a lofty and thoroughly theological basis. Men can only hope for or expect the forgiveness of God for their sins, so far as they forgive their brethren's trespasses against themselves. To anyone who at all reflects on what he is saying, the repetition of this petition must needs be accompanied with some searching and even sinking of the heart. It is one of the most terribly severe passages in the Gospel. The spirit of it is quite different from that in which Mohammedans, for example, appeal to a Deity so merciful and benevolent that he will easily absolve them. Christian experience shows the way of God's forgiveness, and that is the way which we ought to follow in our forgiveness of our fellow-men.

How then does God forgive? Certainly not

by being lax and indifferent, and by looking on sin as a light matter. And as certainly not by wholly removing, in the case of those who repent, the whole consequences of the misdoing. The man who ruins his health by dissipation will certainly not find it suddenly restored when he repents and returns to better courses. He has by pains and wisdom to rebuild it if he can. The man who is tempted into crime will be punished by divine as well as by human law, even if he be penitent. God removes the guilt and blots out the transgression; he may restore peace of mind and renew the relation of spirit with spirit. But the consequences of the crime go on working in the world; and so long as anyone is suffering as a result of the crime, the man who committed it has no right to forget.

This distinction between forgiveness of sin and remission of the punishment is what theologians mean when they contrast nature with grace. Nature never forgives, but inexorably proceeds to develop the consequences, not only of misdeeds but of neglect or ignorance of her laws. Divine grace comes in, not to destroy the course of nature, but to lift the whole transaction into a higher and spiritual sphere, until the punishment which comes in the course of nature seems a small and evan-

escent thing. And more: since the whole scheme of the universe shows spirit working out into material manifestations, the change of spirit may even affect and temper the physical results of wrong-doing, not in a cataclysmic and miraculous but in a gradual and evolutional way. Thus the process of the divine forgiveness shows alike the mercy and the justice of God; but the mercy as after all the dominant factor from the higher or spiritual point of view, though not in a merely secular aspect.

It may be thought that a somewhat different teaching as to the divine forgiveness prevails in the parable of the Prodigal Son. But a closer consideration shows that this is not the case. In that beautiful tale the repentance is especially emphasised. The real stress of the whole parable lies on the value of the spirit, and the delight with which alike angels and good men greet the human soul which turns from evil to good, which was dead and becomes alive again. The humble repentance of the son and the loving and overflowing delight of the father are depicted: and there the narrative stops. And of all the thousands to whom the tale has come as a shaft of heavenly light, probably very few have felt that anything more was needed.

But, if such be the nature of divine forgiveness, it is clear that it takes a line too high for man to follow, except at a humble distance. "Who can forgive sins, but God only?" If a man forgives sins, it must be in a much less sovereign fashion. No mere man has the right to say, as Tennyson's King Arthur does, "Lo, I forgive thee as Almighty God forgives." The Church, as continuing the divine life of Christ on earth, may have the power to forgive sins. In some branches of the Church that power is claimed; but in the English Church the minister does not in the ordinary services absolve, but only claims the right to proclaim the divine absolution. Passing this question, which cannot be here more fully discussed, we must turn to the ordinary forgiveness of man by man. Shakespeare has written, "Earthly power doth then show likest God's when mercy seasons justice." It is fully explained in several passages in the synoptists how nearly man can come to the divine example in the forgiveness of sins.

The Gospels insist that because God is ever ready to forgive our sins, we should be ready, if we have any sense of gratitude, to forgive those who trespass against us. As St Paul puts it, in what may be called a Pauline translation of the words of Jesus, "Forgiving

one another, even as God also in Christ forgave you." This passage has often been taken in an unfortunate sense, as if all the sins we might commit were already beforehand done away with by the death of Christ. But this is not the true meaning. I do not think that St Paul would, any more than his Master, teach that God will forgive sins unacknowledged and unrepented of. Penitence in the offender is a necessary part of the procedure of forgiveness. And, as we shall see directly, such confession and repentance is equally a necessary part of any forgiveness of man by man.

How little St Paul was inclined tamely to submit to injury is shown by his memorable answer, when the magistrates of Philippi sent him word in the prison that he was at liberty to depart. "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they cast us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and bring us out." The Apostle demanded of those who had wronged him a public apology and reparation. Then he would forgive, but not until then.

The teaching of Jesus and of Paul in regard to forgiveness is not, of course, altogether original. It is a fine flower of Jewish ethics

baptised into Christianity. In a paper read at the Oxford Congress of the History of Religions,[1] Dr Charles shows how through the history of the Jewish Church the teaching on this subject changes from barbarous retaliation to kindliness. When we reach in Ecclesiasticus[2] such sayings as "Admonish thy friend, it may be he hath not done it; and if he have done it, that he do it no more"; "admonish thy neighbour before thou threaten him: and not being angry, give place to the law of the Most High," we feel that there is not much more to discover in regard to the theory of forgiveness. What Christianity does, is not to find a new rule, but to put the duty on a high pedestal of love to God and to man as the child of God. By a new enthusiasm it transforms ethics into religion.

II

In the passage above cited, there is no exact statement as to what our procedure towards our fellows should be. That is more clearly explained in two remarkable subsequent passages. In Luke (xviii. 3) we read: "Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." Nothing could be more opposed to this precept than an

[1] *Transactions*, i. 305. [2] xix. 13.

easy and good-natured taking no notice of wrongs done to us. We are to go to the wrong-doer and point out the injury, and not to forgive it, unless our brother repents. In some verses in Matthew (xviii. 15–17) this appeal to the erring brother is described at much greater length: "If thy brother sin against thee, go show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two witnesses, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three, every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be to thee as the Gentile and the publican."

There is an obvious difficulty in this passage, which must not be shirked. The word church (ἐκκλησία) surprises us: for if these be the actual words of Jesus, church can only mean the synagogue to which any of the disciples may have usually resorted. It cannot have meant a Christian assembly, for in the lifetime of the Founder there were none such. There was only one society: and in that there was a present master and ruler, so that an appeal could be referred to him only. It may be that the words, in their present form, belong rather to the time when Christian communities were

forming in various places, some far from Jerusalem, and when each of the little societies was a self-governing unit, like that Church of Corinth, which could meet in full assembly to deliver over one of its members to Satan, in the hope of his final repentance.[1]

The phrase, "a Gentile and a publican," also, though it has the air of belonging to the earliest history of Christianity, can scarcely have come from "the friend of publicans and sinners." Yet in all probability some genuine saying of the Saviour lies behind the words of the Evangelist.

The process to be followed in regard to an injury is set forth with an exactness which is seldom met with in the new legislation. When one member of the little society does an injury to another, the aggrieved person is first to go to the injurer, and to point out the fault, and if he will not allow that he was wrong, the aggrieved person is to refer the matter to common friends or persons trusted for impartiality. If these agree with him, but the injurer remains obstinate, then the dispute must be taken on to the social and spiritual unit to which both belong. And he who will not hear the decision of this little commonwealth, must be treated as a trans-

[1] 1 Cor. v. 5.

gressor of the law of Christian charity, as no longer bound by the common bond of the society, which has the right to expel him.

It is quite clear that, according to the teaching of the Saviour, an injury done by one Christian to another is no light matter, nor one which the injured person has a right to overlook. That would be not to take sin seriously. An injury is an offence against the bond which unites all one to another and to the Father in Heaven. To overlook it would be to show contempt for that bond, and to do harm to the transgressor. The transgressor has a moral claim that his action shall be taken seriously, that his sin shall be shown him so that he may have an opportunity of correcting it. The actual harm done may be but slight; that is not the important thing; the mischief lies in a wrong attitude of one spirit towards another, which is a matter of infinite moment.

It must also be remembered that the person who supposes himself to have been wronged may be mistaken. If he decides simply to pass the matter by, he may be doing wrong by harbouring an unjust suspicion against a neighbour. If he says, "I know the deed was wrong, but I forgive it," he assumes a position of intolerable superiority. The other

has a right to say, "I ask no forgiveness; it is not proved that I was wrong." The only way of untying the knot is by first seeking a personal explanation, and if that leads to no reconcilement, by referring the matter to a few friends. I think that anyone who reflects will see how right is the precept of Jesus, how thoroughly wise as well as Christian is the procedure which he sanctions. It is impossible to forgive any man until he acknowledges that he has done wrong. If he persists in his action, the society may rightly make him feel that he thus cuts himself off from the common life.

With the formation of a separate society, or separate societies, clearly marked off from the surrounding Jewish and Greek population, the circumstances would be changed. With St Paul charity, Christian love, belongs to the members of the society only. And in his view, the Christian doctrine of forgiveness, as a means of restoring charity, would also be confined to the Church. He advocates in all his epistles a kind and gentle and long-suffering behaviour towards all men. But the relation of Christians towards one another being based on the relation to Christ, is quite different from the relation of a believer to an unbeliever. Hence he is horrified at the

notion of referring a dispute between Christians to a pagan tribunal. Only a Christian can discern what sorts of conduct are really in disaccord with the law of charity. And a Christian must needs regard an injury done to him by a fellow-believer as an infinitely more serious thing than an injury received from one outside the society. St Paul's advice that, in the last resort, a harmer of the society shall be formally expelled from it is in close accord with the principles laid down in the Gospels. Even the theological motive so prominent in the Gospels is appealed to, "forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."[1]

St Paul does indeed, in one passage, speak of the patient endurance of a wrong from a Christian brother. Rather than appeal to heathen tribunals, the Christian, he says, should endure wrong, should suffer himself to be defrauded.[2] But it is clear from the context that he regards this as an extreme case. A disciple should rather suffer an injury than drag a brother before a heathen tribunal. As so often happens in the Pauline epistles, the writer is led on to say what he would scarcely have uttered in cold blood. He is, as it were, out of breath with indig-

[1] Eph. iv. 32. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 7.

nation at disregard of the sacred bond of Christian love. He does not say or imply that the Christian should take no action when he is wronged, but only that when he fails of all redress by the recognised means, he should desist. The community is urged to see to it that no occasion should arise for this abandonment of just claim. There is in the whole passage no real dereliction of principle.

In modern days we have again a marked change of conditions. The Christian society is no longer a small band of wandering missionaries, nor is it a constellation of small communities rigidly cut off from the outer world. Europe and America are at least in a measure Christian,[1] and only fanaticism can decide rigidly which men are Christians, and which are not. The change tells more against the precepts of St Paul than against those of his Master, since in his writings the temporary element is more prominent. But in this matter of forgiveness, it is impossible to find any loftier principle or any practical course more satisfactory than those laid down in the Gospel of St Matthew. They combine in the highest degree worldly wisdom and practical warm-heartedness with a lofty doctrine of God and man.

[1] Now, alas! we feel bitterly in how small a measure.

It is clearly the duty of those who think that a neighbour has done them an injury, first to be sure of their facts. And if such investigation does not alter the sinister aspect of the action inquired into, the only humane and manly, as well as Christian, course is to ask an explanation from the person supposed to have done the injury. If he confesses that he has done wrongly, all the force of Christian teaching bids and compels us to forgive. If he maintains that his action was justified, or only in retaliation for injuries received, then the reference of the matter to one or two impartial and trusted friends is the natural next move, if under the circumstances it be possible. Beyond this in modern days it is not easy to go, because the various churches do not, as a rule, attempt to be judges and dividers in such matters. But it is quite contrary to the Christian teaching to think that between injurer and injured things should go on as before. Men should be very unwilling to take offence, should be gentle and charitable, and ready to meet advances half way; but moral indifferentism is a mere disease, and we have no right to regard as still existing a bond which another has by deliberate action broken. Above all, we have no right to be sure that a man has acted

wrongly towards us, and yet not to think the worse of him for it.

It may perhaps be thought that this serious way of regarding offences would make the world a difficult place, would fill it with dissension and strife. As I have before observed, it requires as a supplement a gentle and quiet spirit, not anxious to take umbrage, and not devoid of tact. But if thus modified, I would submit that it would tend not to the severance, but to the refinement and strengthening of friendships. To pass by an injury necessarily hardens the heart and makes one callous. But if a man could take the line of being very loth to believe that a friend wished him evil, and when he was obliged to believe it, of going in sorrow to the friend to remonstrate with him, surely in most cases the end would be the knitting up of a closer friendship than before. Love which has never known a dispute is commonly far less warm than love which has known disputes and has also known reconcilement after quarrel. A typical example in literature is the dispute of Brutus and Cassius in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, which begins with recrimination, and ends in brotherhood.

And perhaps human forgiveness may follow the ways of divine forgiveness in the matter of the modification of consequences. We have

seen that divine grace does in a measure modify the severe rigidity of nature by working within the spirit in such a way as to temper the painful consequences of wrongdoing. It may sometimes be possible, when a man forgives one who has injured him, to make use of the occasion to do the injurer a kindness; and this would certainly be a modest and human imitation of the ways of God.

If the above interpretation is correct, it will be evident how far removed are laxity and indifference from the Christian teaching about forgiveness. We have oscillated from the one extreme to the other. In hard and primitive societies, men find it very hard to forgive. They long to take revenge for injuries, and to forbear to take it when an opportunity offers requires a hard inward struggle. In such societies, indeed, revenge for injuries is usually regarded as a duty; and the man who takes an injury without resenting it cannot look his comrades in the face. In such a society the teaching, "If he repent, forgive him," comes from a lofty, spiritual height. The difficulty all centres in the word *forgive*. But for us emphasis needs quite as much to be laid on the other member of the phrase, *If he repent*. Forgiveness without repentance scarcely comes into the view of earliest Christian teaching.

It is our laxity which makes little account of the moral character of the injury, and its effect on the life of him who does the wrong. Our egotism thinks of the offence only in regard to ourselves, and our indolence makes it seem scarcely worth while to put ourselves to inconvenience in the matter. Could there be a more complete caricature of Christian principle?

VIII

CHRISTIANITY AND THE BODY

I

A CONTRAST which is obvious, and which is justified by closer examination, exists between the Greek and the mediæval feeling in regard to the body. The human body, alike male and female, was regarded by the Greeks in the age of their best development as the most beautiful and the most precious of all the gifts of the gods to men. In comparison with its charm, the beauties of nature, and even the most beautiful of animals, were regarded as almost beneath notice. To possess or even to contemplate a thoroughly sound and healthy body, tenanted by a sane and wise spirit, seemed to them the height of happiness. By constant avoidance of what was morbid and decadent, by constant training and exercise of every part of the bodily frame, they studiously tried to make their bodies correspond to the ideal which, according

to the system of Plato, was regarded as laid up in the world of ideas, to be reflected and embodied in the world of sense.

In sharp contrast to these views stands the notion as to the body held generally by Christians in the days of the decline of the Roman Empire and in mediæval Europe, and especially inculcated in the monasteries, the most characteristic religious product of those ages. Beauty by the Christian hierarchy was regarded as a snare, and even a temptation of the evil one. The natural relations of the sexes, with which beauty is naturally connected, were considered to be at best a necessary evil, and marriage a lower form of existence than celibacy. Even cleanliness, which the modern tendency places near the head of the virtues, and which the Greeks held in very high estimation, was not only neglected in the cities and the cloisters of mediæval Europe, but was regarded as a thing base and worldly. The typical monk was filthy on principle: and the strangest stories were told of men who had made vows never to wash, and were enabled by direct divine intervention to cross rivers without becoming wet. The contrast between the Greek bath and the palæstra full of the shapely and well-developed bodies of athletes,

and the monastery filled with men or women living in dirt and gloom, the gloom only sometimes lightened by an underhand indulgence in illicit passion, is one of the most striking which the world can show. I do not mean to say that there was no compensation in the developed spiritual life of many of the religious; or that the advantage on the side of the Greeks was not in a measure balanced by vices which the modern world repudiates with horror. But yet, in regard to the body as in regard to other things, "we needs must love the highest when we see it."

The modern mind can most easily realise the change by studying the successive phases of art, especially the art of sculpture, for sculpture must needs represent the human body, and in so doing exhibit the views as to the body which prevail among the contemporaries of the sculptor. A decay in the ideal rendering of the body had set in in Greece as early as the fourth century B.C.; and though the anatomical knowledge of the human body steadily increased after that date, this knowledge was at the service of less and less noble ideas and tendencies, so that the representation of the body, as it became more learned and exact, became also less ideal. In the revival of art in the reign of Hadrian,

there is an apparent return to older and nobler models, but such return is only on the surface, like our own return to Gothic forms in architecture.

It was inevitable that the early Christian Fathers should turn aside from the art of their own time, which worked largely in the service of paganism. And so, though the paintings of the Catacombs and the reliefs of early Christian sarcophagi borrow elements from contemporary pagan art, they adopt these as mere symbols, and no pains are taken to keep them at a worthy artistic level. And so for many centuries, perhaps until the year A.D. 1000, sculpture and painting were in Western Europe in a constantly declining condition, least unsuccessful when following pagan patterns most closely, quite without the breath of life of a new enthusiasm.

Mr G. G. Coulton points out how little any love of art was in line with the tendencies of that period. "St Bruno, St Bernard, St Francis, Savonarola, and practically all the creative minds in medieval religion, took a puritan view of the fine arts. Latitudinarian and unorthodox reformers naturally took a similar view."[1]

[1] *Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation*, p. 466.

There was indeed, beneath the surface of literature, an unconscious change in the spirit of man working in the twelfth to the fourteenth century. A really noble Christian architecture then arose centring in the cathedral and the abbey. We still have our cathedrals, but they are mostly emptied of the smaller works of painting and sculpture which embody the ideas of the time in more articulate form. In England, only at Wells can we find any extensive remains of the Christian sculpture of the great age,[1] and analyse its character. Filled and over-filled with symbolism and religious meaning, it is at a low level as regards beauty. The draped figures are sometimes not unpleasing. But when the sculptor has to depict nude bodies, as in his representation of the resurrection of the dead, he fails egregiously. He has not the faintest conception of what is meant by physical beauty. Abroad, at Rheims and Amiens and Bamberg and elsewhere, sculpture may be seen at a higher level, but even there the nude human body is represented in a way which is even repulsive, in the case of men and women alike.

[1] Now carefully published by Mr St John Hope in *Archæologia*, vol. lix. An admirable history of English mediæval sculpture is now published, by Prior and A. Gardner.

There are indeed kinds of beauty to which Christianity was more sensitive than Paganism: the sweetness of spiritual expression, the charm of childish innocence, and the like. Yet it can scarcely be said that Christian art did justice even to things fairly akin to its nature until the Renaissance enlarged its powers and cleared its sight. At the Renaissance a sense of human beauty, gathered from such remains of Greek and Roman art as were then known, spread among the painters and sculptors of Italy. The gospel of Greece once more rose from the tomb and fascinated the artists of Rome and Florence. In the life of Benvenuto Cellini, a vivid presentment of the age, we do discern an admiration of beauty which is almost the only redeeming feature of that striking but unpleasant biography. What is much more doubtful is whether the love of beauty at that time received Christian baptism. The papal court was then far nearer to paganism than to Christianity, and the new movement in art was strongly steeped in sensuality. Sensuality, however, is not conducive to a high standard of human beauty.

In various subsequent schools of art, both in the south and the north of Europe, there has been cherished a cultus of physical beauty. But its spring and origin lies always apart

from Christianity in pagan antiquity. This cultus, it may fairly be said, has never yet been brought into close relation to the Christian enthusiasm, or transfigured by the Christian life. One sometimes thinks, though it is very like "crying over spilt milk," that this was not necessary from the constitution of things, or from the essential genius of Christianity. One sees in the very earliest Christianity, and even in the Judaism which led up to it, a possibility of reconciliation with the true Hellenic ideals.

The idea which lies at the root of the Greek love of physical beauty is this—that God desires to see in every corporeal frame the highest beauty of which it is capable, that he has an ideal after which every person is bound to strive. And every approach to that ideal is in accordance with the will of God, and a gratification of his love to men. The testimony of the world of nature shows all who have open eyes that God loves beauty as he loves right doing. Beauty is the result of long successful striving, the visible sign of easy mastery of one's surroundings. The delight in pure beauty is no sensuality; sensuality usually has a very low standard of beauty; rather it is one of the noblest as well as one of the most pleasurable powers of our nature. And with this kind of beauty, health goes

as naturally in man as in the animal and vegetable world. The note of the nightingale, the flight of the swallow, the swiftness of the wild horse, are all phases of the beautiful in the world around.

We think of the Jews as untouched by the Greek enthusiasm for a sound mind in a beautiful body. Yet some of the best of them, in a way of their own, taught that beauty of body was acceptable to God. It is reported of the great Hillel that when he was about to take a bath, he said, "I am going to perform a religious act by beautifying my person that was created in the image of God."[1] This saying belongs to the more joyous side of Jewish religion, that side which inspired the saying of the poet Judah Hellevi: "Thy contriteness in the days of fasting does not bring thee nearer to God than thy joy on the Sabbath days and on festivals." "And if thy joy in God excites thee even to the degree of singing and dancing, it is a service to God, keeping thee attached to him."[2]

The appreciation of the charms of nature which marks such Psalms as the 104th and the 107th, is equally apparent in the Sermon on the Mount and the synoptic parables,

[1] S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, p. 145.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

which are full of close observation of nature and of delight in it as the kind gift of a loving Father. Nothing could be further from asceticism. But in the epistles of Paul another stream of tendency is already making itself felt. Paul is certainly no ascetic. He does not, like later Christians, look on the athletic festivals of Greece with disgust; but he evidently admires the persevering discipline by which athletes brought their bodies to perfection. Yet in the Pauline doctrine of the warfare between the flesh and the spirit there were hidden the germs of Oriental asceticism, which soon under the influence of the gloomy surroundings of the life of the early Christian developed into an extreme hatred and contempt for the body. One might have expected that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, universally accepted in the Church, would have made Christians more anxious to keep it fair and healthful; but that seems not to have been the case. The noble Pauline teaching that the bodies of men are temples of the Holy Spirit may have incited Christians to chastity and abstinence; but it does not seem to have made them anxious that the temples should be made beautiful. The Hebrew Psalmist longs that daughters of Israel may be as the polished

stones of the temple; but that is no sentiment of early Christianity. And to our day Christianity has never been able wholly to escape from the bias given to it by the pessimism of the ascetics of Egypt and Syria.

It was the beauty of women which mainly inspired the artists of Italy, if we except Michel Angelo and one or two more. A certain degree of admiration for the beautiful bodies of men has been fostered in England and America by our athletic sports, an admiration which one cannot too highly value, since it encourages not excess in those sports but moderation. It must be confessed that in all modern countries the sense of human beauty is in a terribly depressed condition. Largely this is the result of the unhealthiness of our surroundings and the utterly perverted and contemptible influence of modern fashion in dress. We have but to compare the modern standard of female beauty with that of the Greeks to see how far we have gone in the direction of "sickly forms that err from honest nature's rule." Compare the fashion plates of our newspapers with a photograph of the Venus of Melos!

Some attempt has been made in England to connect the health and beauty of athletic sports with Christianity by Kingsley and

Hughes and their associates. It was a noble endeavour. But, alas! athletic sports have in recent years developed in directions with which no Christian teacher, and indeed no serious moralist, could have much sympathy. Extreme specialism and an insane desire to "break records" are rapidly making them distasteful not only to the lovers of ideal beauty but to all who love reason and moderation. Athletics have shown a tendency to repeat the phases through which they went in later Greece, when extreme specialism and over-attention to training brought them into general contempt. As I have written elsewhere,[1] "Athletic sports fell into disrepute as soon as they ceased to be a means and usurped the place of an end. As soon as it came about that a boxer must devote his life to boxing and a wrestler to wrestling, and make himself fit for that at the expense of becoming unfit for everything else, then all men of sense and spirit began to despise both boxing and wrestling. We need not point out to our own youth the danger and discredit which threaten their favourite pursuits, unless they take to heart the teaching of history."

But at the moment, the necessity of military training for young men has postponed this

[1] *New Chapters in Greek History*, p. 303.

danger. And pursued with moderation, athletic sports are of the greatest value to the race.

One of the most healthful and pleasing of the modern developments of art is the sculpture of athletes in America by such sculptors as Dr Mackenzie. This school really revels in the strength and beauty of the male form. And they have gone a long way on the truly Greek line of depicting not mere individuals, but types which combine the beauties of individual athletes. Some of the figures of Dr Mackenzie are a true source of delight to every man who has an æsthetic sense, and they may stand beside the Greek statues of Polycleitus and Lysippus without feeling ashamed.

A far less healthful tendency belongs to one of the recent schools of human art, the school of Rossetti and of Burne Jones, which has endeavoured to produce works in which the beauty of men and women is prominent, but in so doing has widely departed from the ideals of ancient Greece. Though there is an undeniable charm and attractiveness in the paintings of this school, there is in them also a painful lack of robustness and manliness. Nervous exhaustion is written in the faces of their youths and maidens; and their bodies are of the kind which are in real life the prey of consumption and anæmia. Fortunately these

painters really influence but a few: for if they had power so to seize the emotions of men and women as to have effect in the production of the next generation, a great step would be taken in the downward course of physique among English-speaking peoples. These sickly forms are a sign of deep-seated unhealthiness in the world of art.

But the art of Rossetti and Burne Jones is after all an exotic among us, and attracts only the few. A far deeper and stronger tendency is that towards what is called naturalism, a desire to render in art everything to be found in human nature, whether foul or fair, whether alluring or repulsive. This, being one aspect of the great drift towards democracy, must be taken seriously. But it must be observed that the painters and sculptors who profess the cult of naturalism do not attain to naturalistic representation, and for an obvious reason, because the art which is a mere transcript of everyday reality fails utterly in arousing interest. It is beaten out of the field by photography, and cannot vie with the realism of Madame Tussaud. What the proposed naturalists really do is to discard as conventional the notions of what is beautiful and charming, and to substitute for the cultus of beauty the cultus of the ugly, the grotesque, and the horrible. This is notoriously

the case with the novels of Zola, which do not mirror the world as it is, but the world of nightmare. Sculpture until now has struggled very ineffectually to substitute the ugly for the beautiful, since the dominance of Greece in this field is too strong to be wholly shaken off. Painting has better succeeded in directing attention to the things which are ugly and distressing; but the feeling of ordinary human nature is so strongly set against them that they reach only the degenerate minority.

II

There is doubtless a danger that a keen sense of physical beauty, if narrowly pursued, may produce a selfish culture, a culture which leads a man to withdraw himself from the painful toiling world, with its modern ugliness, in order that he may surround himself with things charming and attractive. Such withdrawal, however, could never lead away a man imbued with the spirit of Christ. No man who has a heart can be content to enjoy delights by himself; a pressing instinct compels him to wish to share his pleasure with those whom he loves. One possessed by the enthusiasm of humanity will feel the need to do what he can to redeem the lives of all about him, every member of the body of Christ, from base and

sordid surroundings, and to give them an opportunity of expanding in the enjoyment of the beauty and glory of things visible.

This form of Christian endeavour is visibly at work on all sides of us, struggling often with great pain and little success against the foulness and hideousness of the life of great cities. The societies like the Kyrle Society, the societies for acquiring open spaces, the founders of garden cities, and the like, in trying to improve our visible surroundings, are in a full sense workers for God and joint workers with Christ. They tend to promote the Kingdom of God, to bring down the New Jerusalem from heaven to earth. Not only crowded tenements, foul air, and dirt are enemies of the Kingdom, but a thousand things which we treat as trivial, yet which have very serious evil effects. The vile advertisements which make it a pain rather than a pleasure to look out from the windows of a train at the country round; the flaunting lies which deform our public places and make our newspapers hideous; the unloveliness of our rising suburbs; the destruction of our finest scenery by railways; even the detestable course often taken by fashion in dress,—these are not really small things, but powerful forces working towards the degradation of our race. An earnest pro-

test against them is often met by ridicule; but the ridicule is the laughter of a Mephistopheles, to whom all attempts to raise the level of human nature seem foolish. The more scientifically man is studied, the more such matters as these will rise in importance, as in fact having a great effect on the happiness and the well-being of mankind.

There are two views on which it is right to make war. One is the view which prevails in Protestant countries, that so long as one lives in tolerable comfort, beauty is not a thing that need be striven after, that it is not an ideal but a luxury, that it has nothing to do with religion. The other is the view encouraged in the middle ages by the Church of Rome, that self-limitation and the forgoing of physical development and vigour are actually pleasing to God. In the lives of the saints of the mediæval Church this view is very prominent; that Church taught that every pain which a man inflicts on himself is pleasing to his Maker, that the maimed and stunted is more in accord with the divine will than what is joyful and vigorous. Such shocking fanaticism could not find a place in any mind which was accustomed to studying the ways of God in the world of nature and of history.

St Paul says that Christ is the "saviour of the body." If the views advocated in these chapters be true, if the mission of Jesus, the tendency of the Incarnation, be to make the visible world conform to the image of the invisible, to realise the will of God in the world, then the culture of the body as well as the moulding of the spirit is a high duty of Christianity. The body of the Christian is to become the temple of the divine Spirit. And if we think it right that our churches should be beautiful, should be adorned with architecture and sculpture and be the homes of music and song, then surely the body also should be cultivated that it may be a worthy shrine for the presence of God, should be by every legitimate means made beautiful, not merely in the eyes of those who judge by transitory fashions, but in the eyes of Him who sees all things as they are in the light of eternity.

But of course the nobler nature and higher destiny of man have a bearing even on his physical frame. Though we admire mere beauty of form in man or woman, yet we cannot consider it of the highest type unless it be joined with a high spiritual tone. The body is the outward manifestation of the human spirit, and is in a great degree moulded by the spirit: we therefore expect to find in

it not only the beauty of the most finely organised of animals, but also the reflection of what is within, of what Milton calls "the mind and inward faculties which most excel." And in this more expressive aspect the testimony of the body is but little regarded. The individual cannot help being born with such and such tendencies; he cannot make himself beautiful unless he has natural advantages. But he can at least bring his body and especially his face nearer to the beauty which comes from living. He can avoid displaying to the world a face marred by sensuality or a body misshapen in consequence of culpable self-indulgence. Many a man is not ashamed to show in his own body defects which he would not tolerate in his horse, and which by a little rigorous self-discipline he could remove.

Much of this is unrecognised among us because of a squeamishness which avoids all mention and if possible all thought of the functions and needs of the body. We care for it quite enough; of bodily pain we were becoming, until the terrible experiences of war shook us out of over-sensitiveness, absurdly intolerant; but we have made up our minds by a sort of spurious spirituality that it is on a lower level, and that it is outside the

pale of conscience and of religion. This squeamish sensitiveness is the fruit of morbid outgrowths of Christianity; and in the organic principles of religion there is no sanction for it. A low ideal of humanity, and the perverted notion that God rejoices in self-torture and the extreme of asceticism, have spoiled our sense of the sacredness of the body, and blinded our eyes to the fact that the body is to each of us a trust given by God, a talent to be made the most of.

It is quite true that the cult of the body must not be pursued in an exclusive or selfish way. The teaching which bids us cut off an offending hand or put out an offending eye would commend the man who sacrifices alike beauty and health to duty, who is content to live at a lower physical level, in order that he may benefit relatives and friends. And the unhealthy conditions of the modern world cannot usually be avoided; an attempt to avoid them may often destroy the chance of a useful life. But he who consciously sacrifices the body to the spirit has a right to feel that he is laying a precious gift on the altar of God.

III

Thus far I have spoken of men as individuals, as responsible beings partly physical

and partly spiritual. But the progress of science has in recent years laid more and more stress upon existing men as a link in a long chain, as the bond which connects our ancestors in the past with the race that is to be. If to the moralist and the sociologist man seems capable of infinite variety, a creature of indefinite possibilities, to the historian and the physiologist he appears in a very different light. Far back as we can trace the human race, to the dawn of history about 7000 years ago, and even beyond that to the human creatures of distant geologic epochs, we find these remote predecessors of ours astonishingly like ourselves, with the same stature, the same brain capacity, the same diseases, and the same tendencies. On the surface education and surroundings largely mould us; but a little below the surface we find a massive human nature which changes very slowly. Races of men have never been varied and improved as have, for example, races of dogs and horses. And it has dawned upon many students that if mankind is to be definitely and permanently raised to a higher level, it must be partly by the use of the same means which have improved the breeds of animals, not natural but artificial selection. Hence the growth of the eugenic idea, which at present is usually regarded as

a mere craze, but which has already, at all events in America, begun to leave a mark on legislation.

In past times the carrying on of the race has been accomplished by the working of the primary instincts of our race, almost everywhere, even in barbarous tribes, regulated and controlled by the institution of marriage. Men and women have been swayed by that desire of propagation which is, next to self-preservation, the most fundamental tendency in all living creatures. But law or custom, based mainly on the helplessness of the human infant, has stepped in to arrange that the pair who produce a child shall nurture it and bring it up; and as a natural consequence live together and produce other children. Irregular connections have of course everywhere existed; but it is probable that their disturbing influence on the production of the next generation has everywhere been almost negligible. The result is written large in history. Races of greater vitality and prowess have multiplied and grown, unless kept down by excessive war. Races mentally and physically weak have been pushed aside, and have tended to disappear, unless protected by outward circumstance. Apart from the race question, the inhabitants of particular countries seem to have preserved

through successive ages a surprisingly uniform level of physical, mental, and moral qualities. Men and women have married almost as a matter of course; and tendencies away from the average have tended to cancel one another, and to be eliminated. The incoming of an exceptionally vigorous race like the Norman may permanently raise the standard in a country; or devastating wars like the religious wars of the seventeenth century may for for a long period depress it; but on the whole it shows wonderful elasticity.

But in the last century this balance has been upset by a number of colliding tendencies. Probably the most fundamental of these, in Western Europe and America, has been the crowding into cities, the growing artificiality of life and the spread of material comfort. These things have greatly weakened the primary impulses of our nature. Healthy vigour of appetite in eating, drinking, and sexuality has fallen away. Tastes have become artificial, and often at variance with what is healthy and natural. Hence in the relations of the sexes extraordinary phenomena. We find apparently strong and vigorous men and women who pass their lives without feeling the imperious call of sex. The marriage-rate, and especially the birth-rate, are rapidly

falling in almost all the countries of Europe. And the qualities which attract men in the female sex are seldom vigour of mind and body, but brightness and showy qualities, often combined with poor physique and inferior health. Probably in past times there was a good deal of deviation in men's admiration for women from a robust standard; but it mattered little, when almost every woman married someone. But it matters enormously when male taste acts in the direction of debarring from matrimony systematically those who are best fitted to carry on the race.

Perhaps this phase of the sexual problem is less obvious than another, which belongs to a somewhat lower stratum of the population, the reckless propagation of the thoughtless and unfit, contrasted with the smallness of the families of prudent and cleanly-living workmen. The very conditions of life and lodging in our cities are a terrible handicap against large families, a handicap effective against all those who hate overcrowding and dirt. Hitherto the reckless livers, if they have had more children, have lost a far greater proportion of them; but a very natural and kindly movement for the saving of infant life has arisen, and probably matters no longer adjust themselves. The tendency of society is in-

creasingly, both in well-to-do and poor classes, to discourage the propagation of the most fit, and to breed from those who are less self-restrained, less intelligent, less efficient, physically and morally. It is a by-product of the course of modern civilisation, and a by-product of so deadly a character, that unless the intelligence of modern nations can find a remedy, it will poison society at the root.

This is the mischief with which eugenic societies are setting themselves to grapple. The remedy must come from human wisdom and action; we have no right to expect that the Master of the Universe will alter the laws of inheritance in order to obviate the consequences of human perversity and folly. The remedy, however, can scarcely lie in an appeal to individuals. It would be chimerical to expect an ordinary man to alter a course of action in which his feelings were strongly involved, in order to help to obviate a mischief which threatens society. This is altogether too remote a calamity to influence the springs of action. Many men and women abstain from marriage on conscientious grounds; but they are probably thinking rather of their own immediate future, and the burden of unhealthy children, than of the good of society.

It is clear that if society wishes to obviate an impending evil, it must take public steps for the purpose. Sooner or later legislation will be necessary; only the power of the state can overcome the tendencies of private selfishness. But hasty or premature legislation, legislation which the people do not approve or think necessary, is a great evil. The way for legislation has to be prepared by creating a public conscience in the matter.

And this is a long and difficult task. Individualism has struck such deep roots in modern society that any control of individual action by the state is sure to raise a storm of opposition. And there can be no doubt that the force of popular religion will be at first ranged against any enforcement of the eugenic principles. Probably the eugenic writers have roused opposition by overstating their case, and speaking as if human beings could be bred as cattle are bred, and as if moral aspects of marriage could be disregarded. In America the authorities of the Roman Church are setting themselves in opposition to eugenic legislation on the ground of the spiritual nature of the marriage-tie, which makes very perilous any attempt to interfere with it. I have very little doubt that, in spite of all opposition, the eugenic idea will slowly make

way; and that before very long some restriction will be in most countries placed by law on the multiplication of the obviously unfit.

The Christian view of the principle of eugenics seems to me clear. We have a divine revelation in the matter from two contrasted sources. According to Christianity, the body of man is the temple of the Holy Spirit, a framework prepared by the Divine Providence for the indwelling of a soul which is a son of God. Obviously, then, it is our duty to provide in future times as many and as beautiful temples as we can. Then science comes in and expounds the laws of heredity, and shows that such temples can only be produced, the constitution of the world being what it is, by the conjunction in matrimony of chaste and healthy men and women. The rest is mere matter of reasoning and the adaptation of means to ends. The man who is thoroughly fit to have children, and who either through love of comfort, or some indulgence of sentiment, refrains from marriage, defrauds not only his family and his nation, but human society and the Ruler of it. It is possible that he may take this course in deference to some divine call; in which case he must stand or fall to his own Master. But the man or woman who knowing themselves

to be unfit to have healthy children yet marry, are clearly guilty of an even more serious offence.

The only kinds of legislation for which the times are ripe seem to be two. In the first place, marriage might be forbidden in the case of those mentally deficient, or suffering from certain hereditary diseases. And in the second place, much more might be done by the state than is done at present in the way of providing cottages in the country, and well-arranged dwellings in towns, and by encouraging in every way the production of healthy children. Steps in these directions have been taken lately in England, but they have been slow and apparently unwilling steps, so far as the legislature is concerned. To bring a healthy public opinion to bear on our timid and dilatory legislators is probably the duty that lies nearest to hand.

The problems of eugenics have in the last few years become far more pressing in consequence of the terrible war which has devastated Europe. The tendency of this war to depress the standard of humanity is undeniable. In past days, and especially in the nineteenth century, the fit in mind and body have possessed some advantages for survival over the unfit. In spite of the

countervailing tendencies of which I have spoken, on the whole, energy and vigour might confer such advantages in the struggle for existence that they might hold their own in some measure in the matter of propagation of the race. But war steps in here with fatal effect. We winnow carefully our classes of young men, deliberately sending those who are healthy and vigorous into dangers which must be fatal to a large proportion of them. The weaker, and especially those whose vital organs are the least sound, we retain at home to carry on the race. It is a competition in which the unfit have an enormous advantage over the fit. What the consequences will be in the next generation we may well foresee. It would seem that a general lowering of the level of vitality must take place in all the countries of Europe. Even the women are not unaffected, since the strongest and best of them are absorbed in hospitals, in munition work, and the like, while the feebler and the more inert lie in wait for the soldiers.

It may be said that we have in the past always had wars, and this has been their inevitable tendency. But modern wars are in many ways different from those of past times, and give far less chance of advantage to prowess and to energy. It is not the best

who survive, as a rule, but the most cautious and unenterprising. Modern artillery, gas-shells, and machine-guns mow down whole regiments, the good and the bad alike; only that for dangerous and enterprising work special troops are selected; and often, what is still more fatal, volunteers are called for to undertake some dangerous feat.

However, it is not for a mere closet moralist to suggest remedies for these portentous evils. To meet them must be one of the first tasks of statesmen in the future; if indeed we may hope for statesmen wiser than the people, and prepared to lead rather than merely to carry out popular mandates. Such evils as I have mentioned are scarcely realised by the people at large; and unless the governing democracies of the future are prepared to accept the convictions of the specialists who have given their lives to the investigation of such matters, the outlook has but little of the brightness of hope. God rules; but how far God will allow the men whom he has endowed with free-will to bring themselves to ruin, through sheer perversity and folly, is a matter as to which we dare not dogmatise, though we refuse to give up hope.

IX

CHRISTIANITY AND THE FAMILY

That which makes the beauty and the vigour of the bodies of men and women of so vast importance in the history of the world is the great fact that this physical vigour is closely bound up with the propagation of the race into the future. Of all the great defects of English Christianity, one of the greatest is that it has no recognised religious code of ethics in regard to the relations of the sexes and the ties which bind together the family. This great gap in our Christianity is exercising on us a terrible revenge. In America, where the force of traditional morality is least, we may see phenomena which may well give pause to the least reflective, the commonness of divorce, the complete dislocation of family life, the rapidly falling birth-rate. Those of us who are still young will before we die see this matter taking the most prominent place in the practical life of the western world. Unless

we find some way of staying social diseases which are taking deep root among us, there is nothing in store for the Teutonic and the Latin races but decay and disappearance.

I

Among peoples at an early stage of culture, nothing is so closely interwoven with religion as the life of the family and the clan. The ancestor is the earliest deity, and out of the worship of the ancestor is developed, on the one side, religious cult, on the other side, the ties which bind together family and kinsfolk, the city and the nation. In Greece it was a sense of duty towards the gods of the family and tribe which controlled marriage; at Rome marriage retained a sacred character when all the other sides of Roman religion were falling into decay. But among both these great peoples, at the beginning of our era, caprice and irregularities of all kinds had invaded the sacred fold of matrimony. The Jews and some other lesser peoples adhered, as the Jews have adhered down to our days, to a religious view of marriage and child-bearing; but even on the Jews the looseness of family ties, which was destined to bring ancient civilisation to an end, was not without effect.

The Founder of Christianity occasionally spoke on the subject of the family relations. His utterance that divorce should under no circumstances be allowed[1] is memorable to all time. And by comparing the relations between men and their Divine Ruler with the relations which prevail in families between children and parents, he not only brought God nearer to man, but also gave a fresh consecration to the relation of children to parents.

Those who take what we may call the old-fashioned view of the person of Christ can hardly avoid accepting his decree as to divorce. Those, on the other hand, who think that it was not the intention of the Founder to lay down any hard-and-fast rule in ethics, but rather to inculcate a method and principles, will feel less strictly bound by the decree, and think that when the conditions of society change positive rules must also change. In the long run the decision between these views must be dictated by life and experience. But in so saying I would not admit that all the tendencies which make for easier divorce among us are justified by their

[1] In two of the Gospels this law is stated in undiluted form; Matthew adds, "except for fornication," but this is probably an insertion of an editor.

mere existence. My own opinion is rather in favour of the stricter rule, which has been supported by such unconventional moralists as Comte and Tolstoy.

As Jesus consecrated the filial relation on earth by a heavenly analogy, so St Paul consecrated the marital relation by comparing it to the relation of Christ to the Church. It is very striking and noble teaching, but the Church could not properly assimilate it, because at first it was not disposed to hold marriage in high honour.

The teaching of Jesus as to the Fatherhood of God, and the teaching of St Paul as to the marriage of Christ and the Church, cannot be duly appreciated unless we bear in mind the ideal of family life which was in the minds of the teachers. In modern days we speak glibly of God as a loving Father; and the phrase of course conveys truth; but in the ideal father of the age of Jesus, love was by no means the only prominent trait. Rigid justice of rule was quite as necessary; the father was head and master in his house, and it was one of his first duties sternly to chastise any fault in the children. He had not long lost the power of life and death in his family; and the children who regarded him with affection regarded him also with awe. To please him, if need be to

suffer on his behalf, was the first duty of a child. And we may fairly say that unless this is borne in mind, the comparison of the Creator of the world and the Ruler of mankind to a father has but little meaning. There is no likeness between the ways of God and those of most English fathers of the indulgent and self-effacing kind.

Though, from the higher point of view, one may implicitly believe in the merciful kindness of God, it is a kindness free from weakness. "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and chasteneth every son whom he receiveth." That phrase is true of the Divine Fatherhood, but it applies very ill to the ordinary modern father. And it often comes about that children, who have heard much of the kindness of God, expect God to intervene in cataclysmic fashion to "turn from them those evils which they most righteously have deserved." They expect Him to give them, like an earthly father, anything that they want, or think they want. And when this intervention does not take place, and they are caught in the meshes of unavoidable retribution for crime or folly, instead of "humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God," they rebel, and dethrone or deny God in their hearts. It is a terrible nemesis on parental indulgence, and too often

leads to shipwreck in the sea of life. It is one more of the many evils which arise from the prevalence of a cataclysmic as contrasted with an orderly and evolutional way of regarding the relation of God to the world.

In the inner realm of conscience and spirit, God is indeed revealed as of infinite goodness and patience, forgiving sin, and granting divine aid and protection in every situation of life. But the inner relation between God and the spirit, though it may sometimes dominate a man's relation to the world of sense and experience, so that he will say in looking back on his life, that all things have worked together for good, will not necessarily, though it may sometimes, be immediately reflected in the experience of the world without. God indeed often moves in a mysterious way; and faith may need all her strength to avoid despair.

In the same way, St Paul compares Christ to the husband who is the head of the wife, and to whom she submits in constant and dutiful obedience. The husband who, in his view, should be ready to give his life for his wife, expects in return the practical daily devotion of her life to him. I am not asserting that the early Christian ideal of father and husband must remain unmodified for all time. In these

matters various ages and various races have differing notions; and only the course of the world and experience can decide which is best. But I do not think that modern English views on these subjects are likely to be finally established.

St Paul has occasion to speak of the family relations among his converts, and he speaks always with dignity and sobriety, adopting into the Church a somewhat severe code of family ethics, which he doubtless adopted from the best Jewish life of his time.

But there is in St Paul another strain, the strain of asceticism, which embodies a principle noble, but beyond almost all principles liable to abuse. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman." At the moment when Christianity was struggling to the birth, there may have been deep need to impress upon the converts that what hindered the spread of the new divine enthusiasm must be at all costs given up. And to a certain number of chosen souls, from that day to this, the phrase of Paul may have come as a divine summons. But in subsequent times, amid the surrounding decay of morals, the spirit of asceticism certainly had too great a vogue, and called away from civic life a larger and larger number of the noblest and most devoted souls. Thus the life of the

family was in the early Church often regarded as a mere concession to human weakness and necessity, and the great teachers of the Church, being themselves celibates, did not rate it as it is rated in the counsels of God, as shown by the facts of history. And the great reformers of the sixteenth century, though they utterly revolted against the excesses of asceticism, and did much to restore family life to its position in the Church, yet were unable, in consequence of their narrow horizon, and their imperfect comprehension of human nature, to build up a religious view of the relations of the sexes.

Indeed, it is notorious that in this matter the reformers showed a culpable laxity, admitting divorce with too great facility, and allowing marriages which sinned against the conditions of human society. Excuses may readily be made for them. In a time of general unsettlement, men do not easily see where liberty ends and licence begins, nor readily distinguish between relations which exist in the nature of things and those which rest only on custom and convention. The fact is none the less to be regretted; and the line which the reformers took has been followed with deplorable results in several Protestant countries, and especially in America, where facility of divorce has become a serious danger to society. The Roman

Church in this matter has taken a wiser as well as a nobler course, in setting her face against the freedom of divorce. For once, she is closer to the text of the synoptic discourses than are her rivals. But at the same time, by allowing papal dispensations to override the natural laws of society, she has made a fatal breach between the revelation of the divine will in the historic Church and its revelation in human society.

II

Among primitive men no need is more urgent than that of leaving children to represent their parents in the state and in the family cults. And through the Middle Ages down to our own day, in the case of all families of antiquity and standing, there has been working a strong desire that the family may hold its place in the future as in the past, in the town or the country to which it belongs. This feeling is fatally weakened by the restless and reckless spirit of modern times. The attachment to locality being diminished, save in the case of a few old families, the notion of the family as a continuous clan dies out, and the ties of relationship grow laxer. But the family as well as the individual is a spiritual unit. To each family it is given to play a special part in

the revelation of the divine will in the world. Each family has a mission which it can accomplish better than any other family. Apart from a revived feeling of duty to the family and the nation, one can see no prospect of putting a limit to the merely personal considerations which are at present all-powerful in such questions as marriage and the begetting of children.

It is not only families which possess great estates, and have played a conspicuous part in the national history, which have a corporate life and a continuous history. In the ranks of the less prominent there are thousands of families which have a history and a definite character. One family sends up to the universities in succeeding generations boys who become brilliant scholars; another produces a long succession of soldiers or painters or surgeons. And at a lower social level we find in every country town families which have for several generations been noted for good farming, for honest dealing, for a steady support of some church or chapel, for devotion to local business. Such family traditions are of inestimable value in the life of a country. It is greatly to be regretted that the increasing individuality and growing restlessness of our times are sapping their power. By the Chinese

and the Japanese it is regarded as one of the great defects of Christianity that it acts rather as a solvent than as a consecration of family ties. They cite such passages as "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," and "I am come to set the father against the son," as utterly subversive of that family piety which they regard as the basis of all morality. There can be little doubt that this is a real difficulty. In the time of ferment and new birth during which Christianity arose, it was necessary to insist on the primacy of the individual conscience. The first Christians had to come forth one by one, leaving family ties and mundane duties behind, to work for the future of the race. And when a better religion is proclaimed amid a community devoted to a worse, these conditions will from time to time recur. But in ordinary times there must be a far more evenly-balanced conflict of duties, when the convictions of son or daughter lead them to forsake the faith in which they were brought up. The common-sense of mankind has naturally found this out, and is not too ready to justify the forsaking of domestic duties on the ground of a religious call. But in these cases it is very unfortunate that in practice all the sanctions of religion are on one side, and only tradition and the eternal

domestic affections on the other. The case is really one of the conflict of two motives both religious. But our modern Christianity in this as in so many cases is one-sided, has absorbed one half of the truth and rejected, or at least failed to assimilate, the other half.

The newspapers have of late years been full of letters deploring the decay of home life, and the preference by men and women of their personal happiness and advantage to the more laborious and responsible life in the family. These letters have called forth others in which the freedom and self-seeking of the individual is boldly defended, and the sacrifice of self to the coming generation ridiculed as old-fashioned. How can these contentions be answered? Certainly there is not now in church or state any authority whose pronouncement in such matters will be accepted as decisive. The only decisive voice must be that of fact and experience. It is the great merit of Mr Benjamin Kidd that he has in his work on social evolution so clearly set forth the necessity under which every generation lies to surrender some of its own happiness for the sake of those who are not yet born. Usually this surrender has been scarcely conscious. The profound instincts which in the long run determine

conduct have driven men and women unwitting to do that which is necessary for the existence and the progress of future generations. Great danger arises because we are fast escaping from the predominance of overmastering instinct, while we have not yet learned that in the event not merely the happiness but the very continuance of our race depends upon our subordinating our personal point of view to that of the community, and doing the will of God rather than our own will.

The whole question has become more vital for us, because as manners become softer and life more even, the primary passions of man are affected. Among our urban populations we cannot expect to find the healthy masculinity which goes with robust vigour of body, nor the urgent desire of giving birth to children which dominates less refined women. Nature can no longer be fully trusted; and unless public opinion, duty, religion, come to the help of natural impulse, the consequences to the race may be very serious.

I can but glance at a very unpleasant though important side of the matter. When the healthy urgings of sex are perverted in a society in which the nerves and the

sentiments are abnormally active, we shall find the most painful aberrations from the lines of nature among both men and women. I am not speaking only of unnatural forms of vice, though it is to be feared that these have grown commoner, but rather of the accordance to sexual passion of an absurdly predominant place in life. Novelists both French and English have made a fetish of mere sexual attraction between men and women as a thing so sacred that it will justify the overriding of all sense of duty and honour. They have taught that a man and woman have only to reach a certain degree of mutual attraction in order to be justified in violating the claims of duty to religion, of duty to parents, even of duty to the marriage vow. They represent the sacrifice of all one's purpose in life to the indulgence of passion as a natural and even a laudable thing. The barriers which the wisdom and experience of mankind have erected against the caprices of passion are giving way on all sides. Divorce is becoming more and more frequent, and the re-marriage of divorced men and women incurs less and less reprobation. Even the bearing of illegitimate children is not regarded in the light in which it has always been regarded by

peoples who have advanced beyond savagery; but a pity, in itself natural and Christian, for the fallen woman, has given rise to attempts to justify her, which is a very different thing. However, I must not pursue this theme.

Again, it cannot be doubted that the spread of insubordination in households has gone too far and become an evil. If on the one hand there is excess in the Japanese view that it is the first duty of children under all circumstances to sacrifice themselves for the good of their parents, there is at least an equal excess in the opposite tendency, in western societies, for parents to deny and sacrifice themselves in every way for their children, who do not feel in return the profound gratitude for which one might look. It may often act as a refining and moralising force in the case of parents, and all self-sacrifice for the sake of affection brings with it a degree of happiness. But it is ruin to the children, who are not usually brought by the indulgence of their parents into a condition of reverent affection towards them, but come thoughtlessly to take all that is bestowed on them as their mere due, and to acquire in regard to their parents a feeling of friendship not quite unmixed with contempt.

And such a condition of affairs not only tends to produce a race selfish, conceited,

averse to any kind of order and discipline, but it also acts as a deterrent on those who might naturally be anxious to have children. The reverence for parents and the desire to keep up the family tradition which prevail in India and Japan, seem to be far more favourable to a vigorous growth of families than is the careful self-restraint of western countries, where the fear of not being able to give children all the advantages one might wish to give them, tends strongly, in the case of all but the reckless classes, to keep men and women back from marriage, or at all events strictly to limit the number of children.

III

But, it will be said, if the Founder of Christianity and his apostles did not give us rules of conduct in these matters, did not consecrate for us a way, who shall in these modern days fill the gap? To which the answer is easy. Our Founder did not in this case, as in most other cases he did not, give us a definite rule, but he gave the principle on which rules may be founded. For if the end of religion be the doing of the will of God in the world, then can the will of God be more clearly revealed than it is in visible facts as regards the nature of men and women, as regards family life, and

the preservation of the race? If a man is determined to wait until his duty is written in the skies, or printed in an infallible book, he may defy conviction. But if he is ready in religion, as in all the other affairs of life, to learn by experience and observation, duty will not be hard to find.

The difficulties lie not in the realm of intellect, but in that of will. Statesmen and philosophers would generally be agreed as to the duty of the individual to the family. The question is how to bring this duty home to the rising generation, and induce them to sacrifice what at the moment may seem to them a greater personal happiness to the good of the race. Something may no doubt be done by statesmen who control legislation, and by those who found voluntary societies. For many of the obstacles to the growth of healthy home life lie in external circumstance. In our great cities it is becoming more and more difficult for families weighted with young children to find suitable dwellings. Employers of labour are apt, in defiance of the general good, to give undue preference to the unmarried over the married. And the calling away of married women from the home to compete with men in the ranks of employment is a direct blow at the future of the race. Those

who regard as a triumph every step which leads to the opening of fresh careers to women and promotes their independence, may further the ruin of the future by the present, and do what they can to frustrate the divine will which has ordained that the desires of one generation have often to be sacrificed to the deeper needs of the next. In all these matters society, so soon as it realises its full responsibility, will interfere to control the anti-social action of individuals and classes.

Probably, however, whole generations will pass before a practical socialism of this kind arises. It will not prevail until it has become clear that only by rearranging the foundations of our European societies they can be saved from internal decay, or made efficient against the competition of China and Japan. In the meantime there lies an appeal, which may at least make slower the destructive process.

If we believe, with the Founder of our religion, and with eminent Christians of all ages, that the path of the divine will is really the path of happiness, that no one will really become in the end more miserable because he has tried to co-operate with Christ in the saving of the world, then we may hopefully appeal to men and women to find the Kingdom of God in the life of the family. And in this

case faith does not demand any great sacrifice. The ways of trust in God and of experience reasonably regarded lie near together. For we have it on the testimony of thousands that successful ambition, wealth, ease, all human luxuries, are as a drop in the bucket compared with the happiness of a loving and well-ordered household, that no gratification of the senses can be to well-constituted men and women comparable to the joys of wedlock and maternity. All who have a heart and human instincts must know that only in the marital and filial relations can the affections find a satisfactory field. It may be the duty laid upon some, for reasons of private necessity, of health, of duty to parents, of the service of God, to forgo these exquisite delights. But for the great majority of civilised men they alone make life satisfactory. If there be among us any widespread distaste for them, or any avoidance of them from a fear of responsibility, this can only be a sign of a deep-seated moral disease, which threatens the existence of the race.

X

THE UNREST AMONG WOMEN

I

In treating of the ethics of family life, I have naturally been unable to avoid the question of women in relation to marriage and social life. But it is necessary to discuss this question more completely, since the sex question lies at the very roots of all conduct, as well as of the emotions. But one approaches the subject with pain, as well as with diffidence. For one feels that while a merely conservative attitude in relation to the position and functions of women in the modern Christian world is hopeless, yet when one leaves it, one passes into an utter chaos, a waste which is almost pathless. Emotion and passion have so confused the whole matter that it will take generations before new lines of settlement can be established, or anything like an equilibrium attained.

I must begin by emphasising the essentially Christian point of view in regard to women. It is set forth by St Paul in an immortal phrase, "In Christ there is neither male nor female." As we go deeper and deeper into the spiritual grounds of our being, the distinctions which from a worldly point of view seem all-important gradually lose their meaning. First goes the distinction of merely outward condition, of rich and poor, learned and unlearned. Next vanish the deeper distinctions of race, English, German, French, Japanese; and the radical similarity of human nature in relation to the divine is seen to be the same among all peoples. Last of all vanishes even the most radical of all distinctions, that between the sexes; and the soul or spirit, in its ultimate essence, is seen to be the same, whether it is manifested under the conditions of a male or a female body, mind, and character.

So in essential, or what may be called *oxygenic*, religion, little will be said of sexual differences. In the Gospels these distinctions are scarcely mentioned. In Luke's Gospel, it is true, the relations of women to Jesus are depicted in a most charming and appreciative manner; women do for the Master what men could not do. They move with the

band of the apostles from place to place, and nourish the infant society with help physical and moral. But there is no special women's morality in regard to the Kingdom of God.

With St Paul, in this as in other matters, there comes in some of the nitrogen. He has to give directions as to the conduct of women in the new churches, and their relation to the society around them. And he does it with extreme sanity and wisdom. If we compare St Paul's attitude in this matter with that of any of his contemporaries in the heathen world, we shall form a very high opinion of his intellectual balance. Though he maintains that in Christ there is neither male nor female, yet he is very strict in checking the excesses which are always found in the first ardour of a rising religion. Women owe to him an infinite debt of gratitude for the wise ordinances by which he established the dignity of their position in the Church, while at the same time saving them from such aberrations as marked, for example, the history of the Montanist societies of Asia.

But however fully we may recognise the wisdom of the legislation of St Paul in regard to women, it is of little use to cite it in the discussion of feminist questions at

present; it is not infallible, and it is liable to be superseded by subsequent developments of society. The mediæval teaching in regard to women's place in the church and the world, mainly based on the Pauline teaching, is one of the features of mediæval ethics which are most strongly called in question in the countries greatly influenced by the Reformation. In fact, the only tribunal left open to us, where the principles suited to modern society in this matter may be examined and established, is the tribunal of fact and experience. There is the light of history, which shows us what social position of women has in the past led to good results, and the light of psychology which shows what are the dominant tendencies and the most fully developed faculties of women.

In this as in other fields of ethics the test of *solvitur ambulando* is constantly working. What succeeds when tried will be perpetuated, and what does not succeed will in time be rejected. But the fact of movement does not, without further consideration, show whether it is in a good or a bad direction. Yet the past experience of man would be given him to little purpose, and the results of Christian striving for nineteen centuries would be poor indeed, if a modern Christian

student could not discuss these questions with fuller data and to better purpose than the teachers of past ages, or the mere theorisers and visionaries of the present.

II

There is a notable unrest among women, not only in Great Britain but in all the countries of the Continent; in America; even in India and China. This vast movement means something: what it means probably none of us fully knows; but it is our business to study it, and if we can, to prevent it from breaking out in some destructive convulsion. However, I shall not venture to say anything in regard to the unrest in other countries with which I am not well acquainted: to say anything to the point in regard to the unrest among ourselves is a task hard enough.

The main strength of the women's movement undoubtedly lies in the well-educated stratum of society, in the unmarried women who lead what may be called a bachelor life, and the childless married women. Others are drawn in by sympathy, notably married women with daughters but no sons, or by a hope of bettering their condition, which has attracted many women of the proletariate. And of course feminine influence draws in many men.

The "happy married woman" is usually hostile; and if almost all women were married we should have heard less of the business. But before the war there was a million excess of women over men in the country, and it was calculated that half the women of marriageable age were single. It has become more and more the tendency to expect girls to earn their own living. Hence the insurgent class has an enormous field to draw upon. And without knowing much about physiology, everyone can understand what a vast reserve of energy lies waiting to be tapped. Every woman is descended from an endless chain of female ancestors, *every one* of whom was a mother, and devoted a great part of her strength and energy to the production and tending of children. To this purpose above all others nature has destined women, except a few who are defective. When the stream has gently flowed through thousands of generations, it cannot suddenly be stopped without the most noteworthy results. The unmarried woman who is passing her first youth is full of powers which find no occupation, of energy which finds no outlet. She may become a total wreck, or a merely half-developed creature. But she may also learn to divert this immense capacity to other purposes, to find fresh outlets

for physical and moral energy, to set herself some work to do in the world, and to throw herself into it with all the force of an unconscious yearning for development.

The same thing holds in a less degree of men also. The man who is thoroughly happy in his family life is far less likely to make a figure in the world than the man who is unhappily married or is childless. The unhappiness of the marital relations of men of genius is notorious; sometimes the genius makes them unfit for family life; and sometimes the unhappiness of their lives develops into activity faculties which would otherwise have lain dormant. It is the force of energy in a man which is the determining feature in his life, and that energy is not unlimited: if it is spent in one direction, it cannot be used in another direction. These facts by themselves explain much.

The incoming also of machinery has deprived women of those employments in which they spent much of their time, and which furnished an exercise for their talents. How simple the life of the model housekeeper in Proverbs! She rises early to give to her handmaids wool which they may weave into garments. She eats not the bread of idleness: every hour is spent in the regulation of her household, in

providing food and clothing for husband and children. And by selling her goods she is able to buy fields and orchards. But the making of clothes, even the knitting of stockings, has passed mainly into the hands of great manufacturers. The modern housewife may take a pride in the order of her house and the goodness of her dinners; but such cares satisfy less and less a woman of developed intelligence. Of her hereditary functions woman retains little more than the rearing and educating of children and the nursing of the sick; and even these employments are passing more and more into the hands of trained experts. The women who do not marry have not always even these outlets. And as the broader education of these days constantly enlarges the horizon of women and stimulates their ambition, they have greater and greater desire to find occupations which may really satisfy their longings.

III

The essential Christian teaching as to the value of the soul and its relation to God obviously applies as much to women as to men. It may well be that an increased sense of this value has a great deal to do with the unrest among women. Many of them may

have a conviction, conscious or unconscious, that in the past the souls of women have not had full scope, have been unduly fettered and thwarted by the narrowing conventions of society and the undue predominance of the male sex. If this be so, their uprising is based on a noble impulse, and he who opposes it runs a risk of fighting against God. But even then, there can be no reasonable doubt that, however good the ultimate impulse, some of its practical expressions are contrary to sound sense, and inconsistent with the constitution of society. There is immense need for really wise women, who may discriminate between the expedient and the disastrous, between the course which will further, and the course which will impede, the highest good. As in the case of all sudden movements, there is the greatest fear that the direction of the uprising may fall into the hands of fanatics, of women who are in revolt, not merely against unfair restrictions, but against the very conditions of their own existence.

This applies to the new activities of women, and it applies in a high degree to the relation of marriage. A large proportion of educated women are at present dissatisfied with the working of the marriage tie. But how far

this dissatisfaction is reasonable, and how far it is really a revolt against the necessary constitution of society, is a difficult question.

Clearly it is not for me to try to set forth the ideals after which women should strive. This must be done by women themselves. All that I can venture to attempt is to survey the ground, and sketch the unalterable facts which must in the end govern the activities of women, as ranges of hills direct the courses of rivers.

In discussing what direction any alteration in the status and employments of women should take we have to consider one thing, and one thing only, the highest good of the people. It is a mere absurdity to suppose that the true and permanent interests of men and of women can be opposed one to the other. We have to consider society as a whole; and if the interests of particular classes of men or of women do not coincide with those of the community, it is clear that in any view of morality they must give way.

Of course the necessities and the future of the race must come first. Anything which tends to diminish the inducements to marriage or to lower the birth-rate is a sin against the race. And here Britain is in a very peculiar position. We have annexed an immense pro-

portion of the habitable globe; but we have not peopled it. Vast tracts in Canada and Australia are almost without inhabitants. That they can remain thus untenanted for long, especially in view of the revival of China and Japan, is impossible. Unless they are duly occupied by our people, they must ere long fall to men of other races, probably to men of yellow type. Under the present circumstances, the production of an abundant and healthy race of men and women is an infinitely greater national interest than any other.

A more striking example of the limitations of man's power of foresight could scarcely be found than is presented by the change which has lately come over the minds of thinking men in regard to the question of growth of population. Thirty years ago most of us were Malthusians, and anxiously considering how men could be persuaded to limit their families. At present there is probably scarcely a statesman in Europe or America who is not oppressed by fear that the natural increase of population in his country may soon become a decrease, or who would not gladly find some means to check the steady fall of the marriage-rate and the birth-rate. No one wants to promote the reckless multiplication of the unfit; but all rulers see that the future of

their people must entirely depend on the production of a numerous, a healthy, and a well-behaved population. In the case of far-seeing and representative men, such as Mr Roosevelt and the Emperor of Germany, this solicitude is very deep-seated and urgent. It is realised that the future of the world belongs to the race which best fulfils this task.

It is necessary to observe, a thing which the happily married do not always realise, that the relations of the sexes are at present by no means satisfactory; and as we drift and drift, they tend to become worse rather than better. A great and increasing proportion of the marriageable men and women in the country, the women of course in excess, are unmarried. The birth-rate falls steadily and persistently. And when one considers who is married, and who is not, one observes that it is the unfit rather than the fit who wed and multiply. Men of good physique and steady nerves are apt to put off marriage on grounds of prudence, often to put it off until too late, while the neurotic and reckless make the plunge. The women who are sought in marriage are not so often the quiet, healthy, and well-disposed, as those who have poor physique and an excitable temperament. Men are attracted by a bright eye and a ready tongue, often by

mere fashionable clothes, and are losing the healthy love of mere femininity. In days when the great majority of women married, how they were chosen mattered less. But now that the spinsters bear a large proportion to the married, it becomes of infinite importance that a wise selection should be made. But as among the most suitable men there is a disinclination for wedlock, so it is to be feared there is also among the most level-headed and strong-willed women. We are deliberately breeding from the unfit; and such a course can lead only to gradual deterioration of the race.

In the whole question of the future of women, the one dominant fact is that the relation of women to the carrying on of the race is different from that of men. Men's motive for having children has been in the past in many cases a lofty one, love of country, the desire to carry on a family, and the like. But far greater force has been exercised by personal feeling. Most healthy men will realise how infinitely superior is the life in a family to an isolated existence. But even these motives would no doubt have worked insufficiently, unless they had been supplemented by the instinct which acts directly and with enormous force on emotion and will. And customary law in civilised and

even barbarous communities has stepped in, both for the protection of women and for the formation of an organised society, and made the institution of marriage the corner-stone of all policy, an institution which has been gradually Christianised.

The part taken by the woman in propagation is infinitely greater and more absorbing. From the time of pregnancy until the child is past infancy, child-bearing is in consciousness, and still more in the sub-conscious strata, her most absorbing occupation, ruling thought and emotion, unfitting her for competition in the walks of life, constantly draining her energy. And since in humanity all character is finally based upon the primary demands of our nature, feminine character necessarily drifts in a direction different from that taken by man's. The man protects and cherishes the woman, the woman protects and cherishes the child.

It may be said that after all this great difference in function does not much affect intelligence; the mind of the woman may be just like the mind of the man. Such a view entirely overlooks the intimate relationship between emotion and thought. If energy is absorbed in emotion and affection, less can be set aside to develop the intellectual faculties.

And I think that no one accustomed to the teaching of women will allow that the male and the female intellect are closely alike in their working. Occasionally we find a woman, as we say, of masculine intelligence, but she is not a fair type of the sex. I am well aware of the successes won by women at the universities and in literature; but these by no means invalidate the general rule.

There is a further point. The faculties used in propagation belong in a marked degree to the subconscious side of our nature; they work by instinct, not by reason. As these faculties constitute a far greater part in the nature of women than of men, it is obvious that in women there is a greater proportion of subconscious, in proportion to conscious, impulse and intelligence. I have elsewhere[1] discussed the relation of the subconscious to the conscious in man, and have maintained that whereas some of the subconscious faculties belong to the lower and merely animal parts of our nature, others are doors by which a higher spiritual inspiration enters into human life. The sexual part of the nature of men and women belongs in part to the lower and in part to the higher kind of subconscious nature. No part of man can so easily degrade

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, ix. p. 477.

him, and drag him to the lowest deeps of shame; and no part can so transfigure him, and bring him near to heaven. The lover may be beneath the thinker, or he may be above him; it is very seldom that he is on the same level with him.

Doubtless there is a close connection between the prominence in women of the sexual nature and the well-known and constantly verified truth that while in the ordinary way women are inferior to men in logic and reasoning powers, they are superior to men in insight, in delicacy of feeling and tact. Women are also decidedly more susceptible than men to religious emotion. If the history of religion be studied, it will be seen that men have been the organisers of churches and the formulators of creeds; but the sentiments of faith and adoration have usually been more conspicuous in women.

IV

It will, however, doubtless be maintained by some that although the normal characters of the men and women who are the ancestors of future generations may be thus distinguished, yet there are multitudes of women among us who can never marry, and that the primal nature of these can be so greatly altered by education, that their rational faculties may be

cultivated to a far higher pitch, and their faculties of intuition reduced, so that they will be mentally more like men, and fitted to do in the world the work usually done by men. Undoubtedly there is some force in this view. As I have already observed, in the unmarried woman there is a great reserve of energy which may be exercised in one direction or another, and which may thus be turned into intellectual channels rather than those of feeling. The question how far nature may be bent and moulded by education is no doubt a very profound one. It is, however, manifest that women thus modified can never be *on the average* equal to men. Their physique is inferior; their brains are smaller, and they cannot after all so far modify their physical frames as to escape the consequences of sex. The specialised woman of business has in America, and now in England, a great work of her own to do. It would, however, be a fatal mistake to regard her as the ordinary type of her sex. She is a by-product, which may be very useful for many purposes, but which is cut off from the stream of flowing life. And it can scarcely be maintained that such women usually reach happiness, for happiness comes from harmony with nature, and the exercise of our faculties in the fashion

in which they most naturally work. The energy which would naturally be directed in a sexual way, may further some great cause, or give help to other women; but in a great number of cases it is a source only of disillusion and discontent. In early life many women find a career as clerk or woman of business a very pleasant thing; but as they advance in age, the sense of what they lose must needs grow; and it is no rare thing for women who have made a career to embark in after-life on an unwise marriage. These facts are most powerfully stated by Mrs Browning in *Aurora Leigh*.

It seems to me clearly established by the course of history that for some kinds of religious and social work the best organisation consists of societies of women living together and bound by vows of celibacy. Until a woman definitely sets aside all thoughts of matrimony she is an incomplete being, and liable to be constantly disturbed by sexual ideas. But if she deliberately resolves on the single life, she sets free a whole range of faculties, intellectual and active, for the service of society. The analogy of the hive of bees is very instructive. The working bees are, as everyone knows, females not fully developed. Their efficiency, and their entire devotion to

the good of the hive, are the forces which raise the common life of the hive to an infinitely higher level than is reached by insects of the same type which have the sexual organs developed.

As a member of an organised society the unmarried woman stands in a much higher and more dignified position in relation to those around her. She can compel respect, instead of being looked on as a social failure. And it is highly probable that communities of women which set themselves to any branch of work, religious, educational, or social, will always desire a religious consecration for their union. Their calling will be essentially religious; and they will adhere to some branch of the Christian Church which is best in accord with their intellectual and ethical outlook.

These observations may sound reactionary. But as a matter of fact religious communities of women have rapidly multiplied in England in recent years, and show great power of attraction. I think it unlikely that societies of nuns devoted only to the practice of religion and living apart from the world will in the future greatly increase in number: rather they will gradually die away, and give place to more active societies, busy with tasks for the world,

and finding happiness in active good works. The religious tenets of such societies will probably greatly vary, ranging from Roman Catholicism to very modern forms of Christianity, or even to semi-Christian views like those of the Christian Scientists. But one may well expect them to take an important part in the future scheme of society.

As I have already observed, the world-wide feminist movement has a meaning and deep-seated causes. We must hope that in the end it will raise alike the condition and the character of women. But as it exists among us to-day, it seems often divorced from reason and fact. The one notion on which the leaders of the movement dwell with wearisome iteration is equality between men and women. Whatever a man does a woman must be allowed to do, in education, in the professions, in politics. Women must be employed in the same way as men, and receive the same pay. All the doors must be thrown open to them, and they must be allowed to struggle in the crowd which besieges them.

To men who wish that the movement should bring reaction, this state of things must be very satisfactory. Everyone in his senses knows that it is only here and there that a woman can be found who can compete on

equal terms with men in matters in which her sex gives her no advantage. Miss Sylvia Pankhurst not very long ago urged her handful of followers to fight against the police with fists and sticks. That is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the militant methods. There are many pursuits in which a woman's faculties give her a natural advantage. A number of women turn in preference to the pursuits in which they are at a natural disadvantage, simply because they are intoxicated with the notion that the natural differences between men and women must be overcome.

It is likely that in the future, as in the immediate past, new careers will open for women, and the bounds of their usefulness will be enlarged. Especially in the treatment of the diseases of women and children, in the inspection of factories where women are employed, in the higher education and in research, women are likely to be more useful in the future. But any great and sudden extension of their functions is in danger of being pernicious.

In spite of many failures and many aberrations, it is probably a happy thing that the great war has compelled us all to make a great many experiments in the employment of women. The matter had to be put to the

test. And now it has been put to the test under most favourable circumstances, while the whole nation is thrilled with a great enthusiasm, and the energies of almost the whole of the younger men are concentrated upon actual military service. Women have had an opportunity of showing what they can do, such as they would never have had if the world had gone on a level course. How far they have succeeded; what new realms they have satisfactorily occupied; I dare not venture to say. In fact it is too early to form an opinion on the subject. But what is clear is that an immense flood of new light has been poured on the whole question of women's work and women's efficiency. Theorising in the matter is being superseded by experiment.

But there is one feature of the matter which we can only neglect at our peril.

The progress of the world, and even the existence of civilised society, has only been possible in the past because each generation has in a measure sacrificed itself for the sake of generations to come. Man has been content to do and be less than he might do and be in order that his posterity may have a fair chance in life. It has usually been an unconscious movement; and by far the

greater part in it has been taken by women. Thus self-sacrifice has become the fundamental quality in the virtue of women; it has become an instinct with them; and it is on the following of such instincts that happiness mainly depends.

But in our days men and women are disposed to protest against this profound tendency. Many of them are determined to live their lives, to realise themselves, to find ever fresh fields of action and enjoyment, whatever be the result on the generations to come. They intend, so to speak, not to live on the interest of the accumulated vital force of the race, but to spend the principal freely. In the case of men this spirit is ruinous. In the case of women it is utter destruction of the future of the race. For the forces of the universe go on quietly working in their regular way; and what is done against those ways, in the long run leads to ruin.

XI

CHRISTIANITY AND NATIONALITY

HITHERTO my course has been clear. My purpose has been to show that a modernisation and expansion of Christian ethics is as necessary as a modernisation of Christian doctrine; and that the two expansions must take place on the same lines. As in the case of doctrine, so in the field of morals, it must result partly from what may be called a reworking of the slag of Greek and Roman wisdom, partly from a frank acceptance of the principles forced upon us by the growth of scientific knowledge. Some of the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, Boethius, and others have an element of permanence; and highly as these great writers were valued by the Church during its successive periods of expansion, yet they have something more to teach us moderns. The Greek love of beauty, and the Roman sense of discipline, have also

to be in a measure re-absorbed by the modern mind.

But still more illumination, both in the matter of belief and the principles of conduct, must come from a source which is almost wholly modern, from the investigations of nature and of man which have in recent years been carried much further than before. We have to infuse into modern Christianity the results reached by the great investigators and thinkers in the fields of history and psychology. I have tried, with however imperfect success, to weave together these various strands into something like a consistent rope.

Within the limits of my knowledge, I have dealt with the morals of the individual, and, with greater diffidence, with those of the family. To round off the subject, I ought also to deal with the relations of individuals to the state and with the mutual relations of states. But if I attempt this task at all, it must be in the merest outline. And there is a great and important difference between the consideration of modern principles of Christian morality where the individual is concerned and their consideration in the large fields of the conduct and the politics of nations. The difference lies in this, that whereas the main principles of Christianity have hitherto in a

measure, though often beneath the surface, swayed the conduct of men and women in their dealings with one another, and especially in their family relations, Christian principles have as yet been hardly applied in politics and in matters of international policy.

I

When Christianity started, the relations of individuals to the state were set aside as irrelevant to its great message. The Kingdom of God was to have nothing to do with any worldly kingdoms. The duties to Cæsar were put on quite a different plane from the duties to God. It is impossible in the Gospels to find any statement of men's duties to the organised state. Even St Paul, who so greatly enlarges the field of Christian duty, has almost nothing to say in this matter. That obedience is due to kings, and to all in authority, he lays down with confidence; but if that authority orders anything inconsistent with Christian principles, he clearly holds that it is not to be obeyed, but also not to be resisted. Hence the spirit of martyrdom, which was so prevalent in the rising society. There soon arose clashings between the duty to Christ and the duty to Cæsar; and all the nobler spirits in the Church were quite ready to take the

sufferings which resulted. At most they concealed their higher loyalty: they could not disown it, without placing in peril their eternal life. Matters with us are on quite another footing. It becomes very clear, then, that in discussing from the Christian point of view the question of nationality, we must turn from the ethical notions of the infant society, and must be modern to the backbone, though the great underlying principles of Christ may still be applicable.

In the time of St Paul the great duty was to found a cosmopolitan Church; this was the first demand of the spiritual conditions. Hence his preaching that Jew and Gentile, Greek and Roman, were all one in Christ, that the tie of a common Christianity superseded and destroyed the particularism of nationality. And later, when the barbarous nations of the north were pressing down upon the Roman Empire, it was of infinite importance that the conquering invaders should be taught to recognise a tie higher and more sacred than that which united them into clans and tribes, the tie of a common humanity and a common faith. Among those barbarians the tribal and racial feeling, though beyond a doubt it had earlier been supported by a religious sanction, had grown so strong as to be inde-

pendent of it. Thus Christianity did not attempt to take the place of the paganism which it expelled as a tribal and racial bond, but did all that it could to diminish the power of that bond, to make war upon aristocratic pride of blood, and to proclaim the complete equality before God of Teuton and Roman, Celt and Slav.

The greatest theologian of the age, who indeed dominated Christian thought for ages, was Augustine. At a time when the northern barbarians were making inroads in every direction, and dividing among themselves the provinces of the decaying Roman Empire, he set forth a splendid vision of a city of God, a new and heavenly state, existing above and beyond all earthly states and kingdoms. For Augustine the Civitas Dei was naturally the visible Church of Christ, destined to survive and to supersede the mere temporal domination of the Cæsars, and to unite in a consecrated union all the nations and tribes of which it had been composed. It was impossible, amid the confusion and decay of the time, that any national sentiment should appeal to him.

Of course one cannot venture to condemn the course thus taken by the common feeling of the wisest and most spiritual Christians. Nevertheless such one-sided action must

necessarily bring its revenges. Christianity had stood in the presence of a noble idea, capable of fostering many bright virtues, and instead of absorbing it, Christianity had rejected it and set it at naught. As a natural result, in the west of Europe, the principle of nationality remained unbaptised, an influence hostile to Christianity and apart from the noble and softening influences which Christianity could spread. It belonged rather to the World than the Church; and ever since has often been a stumbling-block in the path of Christianity, though necessary to the morality of all classes, and the nursing-mother of many excellences.

I am compelled, alike by the limits of space and the limits of my own knowledge, to pass in the consideration of the relations of Christianity to nationality direct from the early times of Christianity to our own days. No doubt, when Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire, and the Emperor became in a sense the Head of the Church, there arose a new condition of things. Later, the constitution of the Holy Roman Empire tried to establish a balance between temporal and spiritual dominion. Later still, at the time of the Reformation, the idea of a Christian state received fresh developments, and in

some countries the ruling powers tried to combine political and religious control of the people. From the historic point of view these changes and developments are of the greatest importance. But though historically important, it seems to me that they are not very important from the modern and ethical point of view. They belong to a past which is rapidly vanishing. The collapse of the Russian Czardom shows how little real power the conception of the unity of Church and State has in the modern world. In England, in particular, the alliance of Church and State is in a depressed condition. Those who defend it, often called Erastians, do so, not on the ground of principle, but only on that of expediency. They think that while moral and religious principles are in a fluid, almost a chaotic state, the modified control of religion by the political authority is valuable, as keeping order, and enabling new ideas to make their way beneath the surface. The state is regarded as a mere force of police, to check the wranglings of the sects into which the English Church seems in danger of dissolving. But the authority of the Church in national and international relations, though symbolised by the presence of Bishops in the House of Lords, has fallen to a vanishing point.

If we want to introduce again, into the international arena, any of the principles of Christianity, we must start afresh almost from the beginning; and consider, in the light of observation and experience, how this may be effected.

II

What I propose is to try to make out how the principle of nationality, when accepted in a Christian and idealist way, may be, not a danger to modern civilisation, but a principle of order and progress.

We have to realise that a nation is after all a personality, a being with character and tendencies; and like a person it has about it something sacred. Each nation, like each individual, is fitted to bring into the world, and embody in its common life, some divine idea, to do something towards the prevalence of the divine will under human conditions.

Most of those who have felt the power of our past history in the present, more especially Freeman, have made at least a partial shipwreck on the question of race and physical type. Questions of race are of all questions the most insoluble. It would not be easy to find in the length and breadth of the country a man of pure race. Since we inherit as much from our mothers as from our fathers, and

since no race, except in some degree the Jewish, has been exclusive in marrying only within the clan, a wide mixing of blood has taken place. Every one of us inherits blood and character from a variety of peoples, Dane, Saxon, and Norman, Celtic, Pre-Celtic, Flemish, Jewish, and what not. This is a fact, however much we may regret it; and it is useless to attempt to build on the denial of fact.

But there is a saving distinction, a distinction on which it is impossible to lay too great stress, the distinction between race and nationality. From the race we inherit blood, tendency, capacity, a blank sheet which may be used for many kinds of writing. But from the nation we inherit a spirit and a character. The nation is a personality, not free of course from the tendencies of blood, but capable of building on those tendencies things noble or things base, a type far beneath or far above that of our congeners. Jerusalem and Carthage were closely allied in blood: how different the tendencies of the two cities! The Romans were scarcely to be distinguished in race from the Latins; but compare the history of Rome with that of Tusculum. The people of Athens and those of Bœotia were of similar strain; but the former were proverbial for talent, the latter for crassness.

The personality of a nation is like that of an individual. Each man inherits a physical frame, talents, a disposition; but he may make of them whatever he will, within certain limits, by help of the divine power which works in each of us. So a nation inherits a stature, a form of skull, a colour of skin, certain clearly marked ethical tendencies; but the use which the nation makes of these things depends upon itself, upon its great men, upon the persistency with which it follows the higher path. It has its conversions, its crises, its periods of backsliding and inertness, its times of progress and of colonising expansion. The nation too has a soul and a conscience.

No people ever realised this more fully than the small minority which formed the directing force of the Jewish people. The blessings and the curses pronounced with such magnificent force in the book of Deuteronomy have reference, it is true, almost entirely to worldly prosperity, but they are in the main true to the nature of things. And though there is doubtless a great deal of what is called *tendency*, of high ethical colouring, in Jewish chronicles of Judges and Kings, yet the history there set forth is true in the sense in which the *Iliad* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are true. It is in general accord with the

laws of God in the world of nature and of man.

It should surely be the business of statesmen to judge to what destinies their own people is called, and what capacities it has for realising that destiny. It is here that the history of the country will be of inestimable value, since all progress in the world is continuous, and if the line of past history is carried on straight into the future, it will within certain limits indicate what may be expected to come to pass. The character, the qualities, of a people show clearly in their history, and it is by moving in accordance with those qualities and in the strength of that character that a nation must hope to fulfil its destinies and live in accordance with the divine will. The true leaders of a people can rarely be of alien race, and at any rate should embody the highest side of the national consciousness.

We in England have certainly been somewhat late in our recognition of national tendencies and ideals. But when we accept them consciously we shall have little cause to envy other peoples. Our history is a splendid history; few nations have on the whole showed greater capacity; none has been more clearly guided and helped by a

divine Providence in its growth. If any people can say "our fathers trusted in thee and were not confounded," we can use those words. We are a people slow of speech and slow in thought, lacking in fire, in logical acumen, in taste for art. But we possess in high degree other qualities, less brilliant but perhaps more valuable in the world—determination, persistency, conscientiousness, a strong sense of justice. We are behind no nation in our love of truth and straightforwardness, and in our determination to do our duty, and we possess in a high degree the invaluable faculty of organising, though it must be confessed that that faculty is shown in greater perfection by Englishmen outside our islands than within them. We may well still believe in our future, in spite of the many dangers which beset our national path, and the many sources of weakness and corruption within. It is, however, of infinite importance that we should learn consciously to realise what is our share in the progress of mankind, and do our part in promoting the Kingdom of God on earth. It is by our success in this work, not by the extent of our empire or the growth of our commerce, that England will in the long run prosper or perish.

Many people would now say that England

stands for democracy, as indeed our statesmen have emphatically declared. But the democracy for which England stands has not hitherto been mere *égalité*, the levelling of all distinctions, but something of a more constructive character. This subject, however, lies outside the scope of the present work.

The power of nationality is in the modern world one of the greatest of all forces which have to be reckoned with. Externally it is exhibited in the clinging to a language and to a literature, which represent the nation in an ideal and spiritual aspect. It is manifested in the claim to self-government, that is, to such a condition of public affairs as may give the nation an opportunity of realising its wishes and its character. One may say that in most of the countries of Europe there is a strong feeling that a nation has a soul which may be saved or lost; that in resisting external forces which would cramp or injure its self-expression, it is performing a high and a holy function. No doubt in practice there is in all countries mingled with this more lofty patriotism a more materialist element, the desire to secure mines and factories, ports and colonies, to have a share in the sun of worldly prosperity. But the higher element is seldom wholly wanting.

But as there has become conspicuous in our

days the nobler side of the passion of nationality, so we have seen a great deal of its baser and more materialist side. A few years ago, the arising of the Christian peoples of the Balkans, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, against the domination of the Turks, stirred the enthusiasm of many among us. We thought that a new era was dawning in South-Eastern Europe. The vision, alas! has been obscured; and we now see little but internecine quarrels between the nationalities, each of which suffers from megalomania, and is determined to acquire for itself every square mile of territory which has ever belonged to the race, or in which a bare majority of the people are kindred. As the different nationalities are everywhere intermingled, there opens out a long prospect of continued strife and bloodshed, the contemplation of which may well drive us to despair.

III

But, of course, if one tries to point out the terrible results of the principle of nationality accepted in a materialist way, and striven for in complete defiance of all ethical restraint, one must turn to Germany.

We have indeed lately witnessed terrible things, things more lurid and portentous than the world has ever before seen. We have

seen Germany spring to arms, and begin by violating Belgian neutrality, which she had solemnly undertaken to protect. We have witnessed the ravage and ruin of that most unfortunate country, the burning of Louvain, a fierce and unsparing military rule of a helpless population. We have seen Germany make war upon our own civic population with aircraft and submarines, slaying and maiming thousands of defenceless men, women, and children. We have heard how the ablest chemists and engineers of our enemies have given all their thought to the discovery of new means of torture and destruction. We have been fighting for our lives and our honour against the most highly organised forces of militarism ever arrayed on the earth.

And most of us have learned to see how this terrific outburst is but the manifestation, on the stage of the world, of ideas which had been long stirring in the Teutonic mind, a national pride amounting almost to insanity, a determination that by all means, whether fair or foul, Germany shall have the best place among the nations, and bask in the sun of material prosperity, that every power which opposes shall be relentlessly crushed, that the immediate interests of the Fatherland are the only test of right and wrong, that any sort of

humanity is mere weakness, and respect for man as man a thing to hold in contempt.

Do not these lurid events show that the national principle is essentially wicked, that by following it men relapse from Christianity into heathenism, and from heathenism into mere savagery? Do not they place us in the position of having to choose between the rejection of the national principle in morality, and a long series of wars, ending only with the destruction of the peoples and civilisation of Europe?

It requires some courage to answer these questions in the negative, yet I venture to do so. The root of German militarism and brutality is national feeling, but national feeling debased by materialism. The spring of the nation's action is not so much the hope of raising either themselves or other peoples to a higher intellectual and moral level, as the desire of imposing their yoke upon other peoples, and procuring for themselves the lead in wealth and commerce. As materialism has been the cause of corruption in the universalist civilisation of England and America; as the haste to be rich has led them into all sorts of dishonesty and abomination, so the same tendencies have plunged Germany into crime and blood.

It is not only Christian ethics which the Germans have abandoned. They have also abandoned that compound of nationality and Christianity, chivalry. They have regarded the end, victory at any price, as excusing and sanctioning any means by which it may be won. They have distinctly debased the current usages of war, and increased its horror and brutality. Thus they have rejected not only the Christian ideal, but also the traditions of their own knightly ancestors.

The Germans, it is true, sometimes talk of a hope, when they are victorious, of spreading through the world their Kultur. It is doubtless the fact that in some branches of science the Germans excel other peoples; and that they have carried further than other peoples their organisation, which is conspicuous in all intellectual, scientific, and social developments. But they have given in recent history very little sign of helping other peoples by imparting to them their methods: rather they use those methods to the utmost in exploiting other peoples. And Culture, in any higher sense of the term, has, as all impartial observers have declared, not advanced in Germany in recent decades, but steadily declined. In the middle of the last century Germany was eminent in literature, in philosophy, in music, in the study

of history and the like. But the growth of extreme specialism has acted as a blight on Culture; and Germany no longer produces the intellectual giants of half a century ago. In fact, this talk about Kultur is one of the expedients by which Germany tries to conceal from herself the materialism and selfishness of her endeavours, and her attitude of inhumanity towards other peoples.

Yet the great qualities of the German people, with which many of us have become personally familiar, cannot have disappeared. They can only be concealed for a time by the stress of war and the dominance of militarism. Some day, when the passing madness is over, they will again come to the top; sooner if Germany suffers defeat, later if she is victorious. We cannot believe that God will finally abandon Germany, any more than we can believe that He will abandon England. Among hopeful symptoms none is more to the point than the saying of Dr Michaelis, a former Chancellor of the German Empire, that the war is a punishment on Germany for her worship of wealth and material progress. There must be movements going on beneath the surface of which we hear little.

I venture to maintain that even already we may see strong ethical currents underlying

events. The Germans have had a great measure of success; but it has really been due rather to their virtues than their vices, not to the policy of frightfulness, but to intense patriotism, discipline, self-surrender to what they regard as a national call; and above all, the great virtue of taking trouble, and giving their best mind to what they attempt, which is one of the greatest of all virtues, not only in commerce and intellectual matters, but even in the moral aspect. It is no new discovery that order is Heaven's first law. And the world at large, however it may resent the spirit of Germany, will have to learn a great deal more from its order and discipline before the world can combat its influence. The brutalities which have shocked us are the result in most cases of a pedantry which carries out the military code without any regard to human feeling and Christian emotion; a kind of pedantry in action which corresponds to the pedantry in thinking to which we have long been accustomed in German writers. But great as is our natural indignation, we must not let it blind us to our own faults, which lie in exactly the opposite direction, in exaggerated individualism, want of discipline, the overvaluing of sentiment in comparison with principle.

IV

But let us turn from the painful prospect of Germany, to consider our own position, our own responsibilities. It has always been the way of mankind to compound for sins we are inclined to by damning those we have no mind to. And I fear that there are deep shadows on our English culture, even if we escape the besetting sins of Germany.

If Germany has erred in the direction of over-development of the state, by placing it above morality and Christianity, England has erred in the opposite direction, by the extreme of individualism, and the excess of party spirit. We have allowed individual liberty to defy the general good, to carry out plans and purposes which in a really healthy state would have been placed under severe control. The excess of *laissez faire* has placed such things as the growth of towns, the amenities of the country, even the health and welfare of whole communities, at the mercy of unscrupulous men of wealth. And the wretched growth of the spirit of political party has, in the minds of whole sections of the people, made party gain eclipse the good of the state, and handed over the government of the country, not to far-sighted statesmen, keenly alive to

the signs of the times and anxious to provide for the future, but to politicians who follow a short-sighted public opinion, and are more anxious to secure an oratorical party triumph than to introduce really wise government. In the first years of the war the party spirit was quenched by a general enthusiasm; but there are now signs of its revival, and in a worse form: it looks as if instead of party against party we shall have class against class, while the great principles of wisdom and justice, and of adaptation to the coming changes in the organisation of the world, are but little regarded.

Nothing could more clearly show the excess of individualism in England before the war than the outbreaks of lawlessness, and the popular sympathy which they have commanded. Not long ago, insurgent women claimed that unless they had a share in the making of laws they would not obey them, and England was made ridiculous and abased in the eyes of the world because she could not resolve to enforce the laws against these women. More recently we have been vexed by the conscientious objectors, who were determined—that is, those of them who did not use their consciences merely to hide their cowardice—that their private views of moral-

ity should be allowed to override all the claims of the community, and exempt them from any national service. Them also some have defended: fortunately they were but few. Not that the state has any right to override the conscience of individuals as to right and wrong; but it has a perfect right either to require such services as it needs from any man, or else to withdraw from him all help and protection. These objectors claimed to receive a number of inestimable benefits from the state and then to refuse to give what was asked in return. The logical plan would be to exile them; or to confiscate the property which they could only hold by means of the protection afforded them by the state. And if they were consistent in their conscientiousness they could not complain.

When the protests of these insurgents appeared in the newspapers, one's mind went back to the immortal example of Socrates. Unjustly condemned to death, and offered the means of escape from prison, he refused to be rescued, because he felt that one who had received from his childhood onwards all manner of good from the laws and institutions of the state must be prepared also to receive evil if the state judged it necessary, and to suffer and die without any complaining.

Undoubtedly the war will in social matters have important effects. One province after another of industrial and commercial life has been taken over by Government; and we have been despotically ruled by a group of dictators, obedience to whom has been less often compelled by law than produced by public opinion, as set forth by the newspapers. But while obedience has been general, excluding disloyal individuals and groups, there has been at the same time a great and growing chorus of complaint at the unwisdom shown by the great organisers. And there is widely spread a feeling that our submission to them is only a matter of necessity, a temporary phase to be thrown off as soon as it is at all possible, in face of the national danger, to revolt against the yoke.

When peace returns, will the central control which has been set up be continued and solidified, or even extended in new directions? Or will the individualism which was so pronounced a national feature reassert itself? It would be rash to attempt to answer the question. There must be in England clashings and crises at the magnitude of which one may well stand appalled. But it is safe to prophesy that whatever happens in the immediate future, in the long run it is a

question of ideas. Mere desire of well-being and the war of classes is not a principle of reconstruction, and can never lay the foundations of a noble or a durable commonwealth. It is only in proportion as the people of England realise that the thing to be aimed at is health and happiness rather than prosperity, and general good-feeling rather than the humiliation of one class by another, that they can recover from the terrible ravages of war, and "build Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land."

If it be the sin of Germany to have corrupted the national ideal with materialism, it must be confessed that England also has sinned as grievously in another direction. We have corrupted with materialism the ideals of individualism. We also have made material prosperity the end and object of our strivings. We have made haste to be rich, to exploit in the interests of a material civilisation all the sources of wealth provided by a scientific use of natural resources. We have too often forgotten that material resources are not in themselves an end but only a means which may be used for good or for bad purposes. Instead of using our vast wealth to raise the level of life for all the nation, we have allowed whole classes of

the people to remain in squalor and misery, while trusts and capitalists struggle one with another in eager contest as to who shall secure the greatest share of the spoils. Individualism has run mad, and flung aside in contempt the moral considerations which in any healthy society curb the strivings of the wealthy after dominance.

Hence, just as Germany has thrown away morality in the eagerness for national success, so whole classes in England and America and elsewhere have thrown aside all ethical considerations in the hunt after wealth and material prosperity. They have almost forgotten that there are such considerations. The difference between Germany and England in the rejection of ethical principle lies mainly in this, that the Germans being a more rationalist and callous people carry out their intentions with less scruple and more thoroughness, whereas in England there still rules an immense deal of traditional and instinctive scruple, so that here men of affairs are not so bad as their want of principles would lead one to expect.

Nor is it only in the conduct of individuals that materialist greed has reigned. It has been written large in a great part of our empire-building and our foreign policy. We

forget that it is not long since Clive and Hastings founded by very unscrupulous means the British Empire in India; and that even in more recent times such proceedings as the Jameson raid have disgraced our foreign politics. There is no doubt another side to the matter. British rule has been in many parts of the world a great blessing; it has usually taken the place of something inferior to it, most of our rulers and magistrates have been high-minded and just men, who have studied the good of the peoples committed to them. All this is quite true; but it does not affect my present point, that the ethics of the British domination bear but little of the impress of Christianity. Our wars in India were much like the Roman wars in Asia. On the whole, the Roman domination in the Mediterranean was a good thing; as on the whole our rule in India has been a good thing. But we have not acquired the British Empire on any really Christian principle.

Can we wonder that, not only in Germany, but also in most countries of the Continent, a reproach most commonly brought against England is that of hypocrisy? It is not really hypocrisy, but it is a national dullness to ideas, a national contempt for any radically consistent policy. I think that a subconscious feeling

of our radical inconsistency has been a great source of weakness. We have grown out of the way of searching for right principles of national action, and carrying them out consistently, so that our course has been full of turns and compromises; and the paths of right and wrong have not lain clearly before us.

V

Surely our duty does not end with the working out of our national destinies. Just as an individual who is always thinking of his own character and duty and not of the good of his neighbours tends to subjectivity and egoism, so a people which will not recognise the destinies and the faculties of neighbouring nations is convicted of selfishness. Such selfishness, it must be confessed, has been the ordinary tone of international politics in the past; and probably most politicians would regard any other tone as chimerical. Yet we clearly see that if national clashings go on in the future as in the past, the only prospect before the world is one of a succession of wars, each more destructive and terrible than the last, until European civilisation drops into the gulf and disappears.

I do not believe that the hope for the future of humanity lies either in the spread of the

mere principle of nationality or in the merging of the idea of nationality in a broad humanitarianism. The example of Germany shows that the principle of nationality when carried to excess leads to a reckless and inhuman militarism. The example of England and America proves that the principle of individualism when carried to excess leads to corruption, to the extremes of wealth and poverty, to luxury and social war. And, at all events until man has climbed to a higher level of being, the principle of universalism when carried to excess leads to sentimental weakness, to cowardice, and to anarchy. The thing to be hoped for and to be worked for is a combination of the three under the guidance of wisdom, idealism, and Christianity.

Nationalism may become a lofty and even a religious tendency if the rulers work not merely for the advancement of their people into the sunshine of material prosperity, but into the realisation of national character, and the accomplishment in the world of the things which that people is by nature and history qualified to accomplish; while at the same time the qualities and powers of other peoples are recognised, and we try not to thwart but to aid the good and reasonable developments of other nations.

Individualism may also become a power of health and expansion, if the individual, while trying to realise the ideal embodied in his own nature and character, tries to help others also to do the best they can for the progress of mankind. If unrestricted competition in matters industrial and commercial leads to mere clashing, and to the exploitation of the weak by the strong, yet it is ultimately the self-realisation of the individual, the formation of character, and the production of good works in the world which produces the well-being and the happiness of the community.

And universalism, on the lines laid down for all future ages by the Founder of Christianity, is the only force which can make men prefer the invisible to the visible, the spiritual to the temporal, and so furnish high ideals, and noble principles of action alike to the nation and to the individual. In these matters, as in all others, it is selfishness and materialism, materialism and selfishness, which turn to bad ends powers and tendencies which when rightly used and followed might lead to blessedness.

It is a confirmation of the view taken in Chapter III. as to the essentially self-contradictory character of secularist axioms, that the desire of nations for physical expansion and wealth has brought about a war which has

almost entirely destroyed the wealth which had been for the last century heaped up in the expanding countries. People do not generally realise that our wealth is gone, but they will find it out before long.

The nations of the Entente are committed to fighting for one defined object, the right of self-determination of peoples and the triumph of democracy. As opposed to the mere spirit of military autocracy these are doubtless noble purposes. But they are means rather than ends. The present state of Russia furnishes a lurid commentary on the belief that democracy will necessarily bring salvation to society. And even the self-determination of peoples will not bring peace or happiness unless the peoples have lofty ideals of national self-realisation. The attempt of the Turks to produce a national revival has so far led to little but a series of atrocious massacres of Armenians and Greeks. Still less can any such movements as that of the proletariate for greater political power, or of women for fuller liberty, lead to any real raising of the standard of life, unless these activities are dominated by something better than a mere selfish motive. Liberty is doubtless a good thing; but, like all good movements, the movement towards freedom will only benefit a nation, or

even a class within the nation, when it is inspired by lofty ideals, and is careful to allow a similar liberty to other nations and classes.

Christianity has always made war, with however imperfect success, on the selfishness and materialism of individuals. If it has not made war in like manner upon the selfishness and materialism of nations, it is because in all its earlier history it regarded the spirit of nationality as a thing with which it had nothing to do. When in early days the Church baptised into Christ Jewish ethics and Greek philosophy and Roman organisation, it left the enthusiasm of nationality unbaptised. But it furnished the principles with which, if ever nationality was to be baptised, it must be consecrated. Has the Church Universal of Christ now the power to remedy this omission, and to baptise this last and greatest of the heathen? I fear we should look in vain for any attempt in this direction on the part of the Papal Curia, which has shown in recent years no power of assimilating the spirit of the new age, but has turned its face steadily not to the future but to the past. But there are forces and enthusiasms stirring in all branches of the Church, not among Cardinals and Bishops but among enthusiasts in obscure places. And it is

certain that among the movements which are bubbling up from below, some will take the form of an attempt to apply to nationalities the principles of Christian ethics.

It seems to me futile to suppose that merely negative international morality will suffice to block out war in the future. That a nation ought to adhere to its treaties, and honourably keep its word, is no doubt a part of the ethics of nations. But recent events have shown that as a restraining force mere probity of this kind is of little value. It is not only Germany which regards treaties which hamper the expansion of national energy as not binding. Germany tears up such pieces of paper with brutal frankness when military advantage bids. But other peoples have on occasion refused to regard a treaty which they consider an impossible restraint on growth and development as sacrosanct. And this view is really endorsed by International Law, for it is recognised by that law that by declaring war a nation may at a stroke release itself from unpleasant obligations. And treaties concluded under the pressure of military force are not binding upon the conscience of the people which is compelled to conclude them. Even in civil law a promise made under duress, or in consequence of false representations, is not

binding; and a nation may nearly always find a pretext of this kind when it feels an impulse towards fuller life. Mere negative morality is a frail barrier, unless there is, as in the case of private persons, some external power to stand behind and enforce it. Any force which in the future sways the nations in the direction of righteousness in their dealings with one another must be of a more positive and more spiritual kind.

I fear it may be objected that if, in nineteen centuries Christianity, in spite of constant efforts, has done so little to raise the morality of the individual, and to inspire him with the love of God and man, it is surely hopeless to expect that now at the end of many ages the main principles of Christianity can be so imported into the relations of the peoples as to put them on a new level. If the spirit of nationality has for all these ages escaped Christian baptism, can we expect it now to submit to the spirit of Christ? Of course, one cannot under the circumstances hope for any rapid or immediate change. Modern nations must pass through terrible calamities and bitter trials before they will see the way of escape. But if this is the one hope of the future, it is our business not to give way to despair, but to do what we can to introduce

in the world the divine Kingdom of our Master.

Looking about us at present, the horizon is indeed dark. Germany, as we are all agreed, carries national egotism to the verge of insanity. It looks on all questions of the mutual relations of nations simply in the light of German interests; and is entirely unscrupulous as to the means which it employs to further those interests. The peoples of the Balkans hate one another with a bitter hatred; and the alliance between them against Turkish supremacy which seemed hopeful a few years ago has vanished in a black cloud of strife and cruelty.

When we turn to the Anglo-Saxon peoples, the prospect is far less dark. In spite of much chauvinism in England, and in spite of the regrettable saying, not so long ago, of President Wilson, that he was for America only, and for America all the time, we may see the working of another spirit. The revelations of Prince Lichnowski, German Ambassador in England in 1914, have shown how Lord Grey, carrying on the fixed traditions of the Foreign Office, laboured hard to prevent war, and to satisfy the equitable claims of all peoples.

England has, in the past, really cared about the national revival in Italy, in Serbia, and

other countries. We would go a long way, and submit to great sacrifices, if we could establish in Ireland a state of things in which the character of the people could have free play. Before the fatal period of 1870, many in England rejoiced at the growth of German unity. And more recently it was a profound sympathy with Belgium which united us and the Americans in a firm resolve to fight against the reckless militarism of the Hohenzollerns. America indeed is probably in this war as disinterested and unselfish as any nation has ever been in undertaking a terrible task for the good of other peoples. The feeling is probably both in England and America most highly developed in particular circles; but the whole nation follows willingly.

Of course we must not forget how much easier such feelings of friendship and sympathy are in peoples which bask in the sun of prosperity, and have all they really want in the way of national possessions, than they are in nations which are struggling for national objects. France, Italy, Roumania, all feel deeply the pain and humiliation of seeing many of their co-nationalists under a harsh and foreign domination. The suspicion of such a state of things in South Africa made England plunge into the Boer War. And

Germany feels intensely that her position in the world is quite incommensurate with her education, her talents, her energy. Perhaps we have not in the past been ready enough to recognise the explosive force of such a conviction; if so, we have paid dearly for our want of sympathy.

There is, and can be, only one way for gaining a satisfactory outlook, and putting ourselves right with the order of the world and its divine Controller. That way may be hard; but unless we discover and follow it, our final doom cannot be averted. Inconsistency in matters of national policy can only be avoided by the discovery of true principles, and the determination to carry them out, even at a great cost. And it is clear that they must lie in the middle ground between the individualism of early Christianity and the hyper-nationalism of Treitschke. Quietism and the non-resistance of injuries is not possible for a nation; and least of all possible to a nation which has without deliberate planning grown to be a great power in the world, and to dominate a great proportion of the fairest regions of the earth. But, on the other hand, the principle that might is right, that there is no morality in the relation of nations but the law of self-preservation and expansion, is

hideous. And the adoption and consistent carrying out of that principle by Germany has thoroughly aroused our consciences to its hideousness. There is no fear that England may consciously adopt it; though we may well unconsciously act in accordance with it.

But there is a higher third course. It may be possible to bring into the relations of nations something of the comity and mutual appreciation which is introduced, at least in a measure, in well-disposed communities, in the relations of individuals. Far as our social arrangements are from perfection, they are not, between neighbours, governed by mere greed and the desire of dominance. Men who are allowed by their neighbours to be good show mercy, sympathy, good-will in their dealings with one another. Instead of trying to drive out and suppress those with whom they come in contact, they learn to respect their characters, to appreciate whatsoever in them is good and true and lovely. If the international morals of Europe could be raised even to the level of the ordinary civic life of individuals, it would not be an ideal condition of policy, but it would be an enormous improvement on that which exists. Nations would not be blinded, by a misleading if natural prejudice, to think that they alone are children of the light, and

that other peoples lie at a lower level. They would see that there are few nations which do not in some points of morality excel the rest, and which do not bring some contribution towards the highest ideal of humanity. I cannot here develop this theme. But I may venture to insist that an exclusive valuing of one's own people and their character is as ugly a thing in the world as is in a smaller sphere a developed and complacent egotism. As a small society is only healthy when it is made up of individuals who respect and value one another, so the world can only be healthy when nations respect one another. This ideal, alas! seems far enough away now. War naturally stimulates an intense patriotism. Yet it is only by a curbing of that patriotism by a sense of the mission of other peoples and our duty to them that there is any prospect of exorcising the hideous spectre of war, and bringing back a state of comparative rest among the peoples.

It seems to me that, until such feelings as these find more general acceptance in the world, ambitious schemes for a League of Nations to guarantee universal equity and to preserve international peace are impossible of realisation. You cannot make leagues except among friends; and at present the nations

which count show no signs of becoming friends. A simple consideration will show how chimerical these schemes are. Is the league to exclude Germany and Hungary? In that case it would be useless; we have in fact at present a league almost as extensive as this. Is it to include Germany and Hungary? In that case it would at once split into two sections, and cease to have any unifying power. If Germany were powerless, or completely changed her way of regarding things, such a league might be dreamed of; but this can scarcely be the case, whatever happens in the immediate future. There is nothing for it but to wait; and to work for the spread through the world of a better, a more humane, a kindlier spirit.

And such a spirit will never be propagated by the mere desire for material comfort. Such a desire is the main cause of strife, whether between nations or between classes. It is only by spreading the root-principle of Christianity, that the love of one's neighbour has to be fused with the love of God, that nations can be moved to a better frame of mind. The immortal saying of Jesus, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," is as true when applied to the relations of states as when applied to individuals.

VI

In order to make this survey complete, I ought to add a chapter on Christianity and Universalism. For indeed in England and America there is a strong and growing sense that it is the great duty of the visible Church of Christ to proclaim an unity higher than that of nationality. On all sides we see the separated branches of the Church drawing together, and considering how, at least for certain purposes, they may become united. This tendency one may watch with the deepest sympathy and the strongest hope. And there can be no doubt that it has been fostered by the experiences of the war. But at present it is only in an inchoate condition. It is likely that its action will draw many towards the more highly organised and powerful churches.

If these churches had the courage to launch out more boldly: to think less of consistency with the past, and more of meeting the needs of the present and providing for the future, there seems hardly a limit to what they might accomplish. But this is far too great a matter to be taken up in the last pages of a small volume, and too practical a subject to be discussed in a work devoted

to the consideration of principles and tendencies. I leave this subject, as I have left the future of the family and other practical questions, to writers more accustomed to organisation and to practical statesmanship.

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